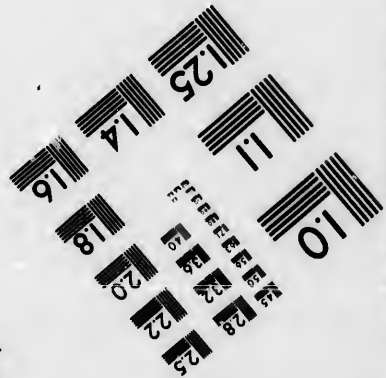
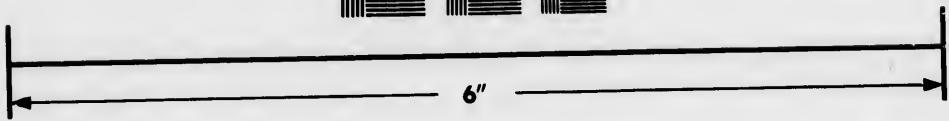
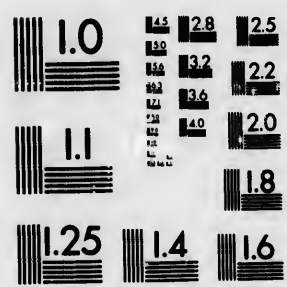


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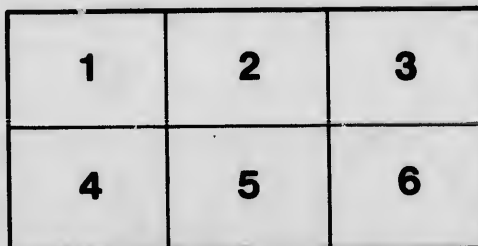
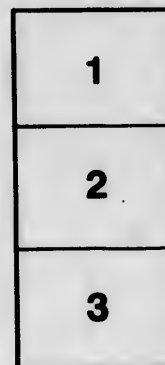
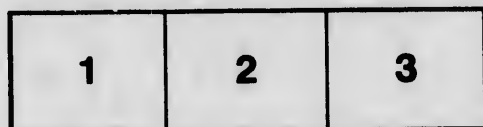
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87 Years have I been travelling on this earth endeavouring to do good

JOHN WESLEY.

THE
CHRISTIAN'S PATTERN;
OR,
A TREATISE
ON THE
IMITATION OF CHRIST.

WRITTEN IN LATIN
BY THOMAS A KEMPIS.

ABRIDGED, AND PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH,
BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

HALIFAX:
MILNER AND SOWERBY;

1862.

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PREFACE.

As it is impossible for any one to know the usefulness of this Treatise, till he has read it in such a manner as it deserves; instead of heaping up commendations of it, which those who have so read it do not want, and those who have not will not believe, I have transcribed a few plain directions how to read this, or indeed any other religious book, with improvement.

1. Assign some stated time every day for this pious employment. If any indispensable business unexpectedly robs you of your hour of retirement, take the next hour for it: when such large portions of each day are so willingly bestowed on bodily refreshments can you scruple allotting some little time daily for the improvement of your immortal soul?

2. Prepare yourself for reading by purity of intention, whereby you singly aim at your soul's benefit; and then, in a short ejaculation, beg God's grace to enlighten your understanding, and dispose your heart for receiving what you read; and that you may both know what he requires of you, and seriously resolve to execute his will when known.

3. Be sure to read, not curiously and hastily, but leisurely, and with great attention; and with proper intervals and pauses, that you may allow time for the enlightenings of divine grace. Stop every now and then, to recollect what you have read, and consider how to

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reduce it to practice. Farther, let your reading be continued and regular, not rambling and desultory. It shows a vitiated palate, to taste of many dishes without fixing upon, or being satisfied with, any: not but what it will be of great service to read over and over those passages which more nearly concern yourself, and more closely affect your own passions and inclinations; especially if you add a particular examination upon each.

4. Labour for a temper correspondent to what you read: otherwise it will prove empty and unprofitable, while it only enlightens your understanding, without influencing your will, or inflaming your affections. Therefore intersperse here and there, pious aspirations to God, and petitions for his grace. Select also any remarkable sayings or advices, treasuring them up in your memory to ruminate and consider on; which you may either in time of need draw forth, as an arrow from a quiver against temptation, against this or that vice which you are more particularly addicted to; or make use of as incitements to humility, patience, the love of God, or any virtue.

5. Conclude all with a short ejaculation to God; that he would preserve and prosper his good seed sown in your heart, that it may bring forth its fruit in due season. And think not this will take up too much of your time; for you can never bestow it to so good advantage.

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THE
CHRISTIAN'S PATTERN.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

*Of the Imitation of Christ, and Contempt of
the Vanities of the World.*

HE that followeth me walketh not in darkness, saith the Lord. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, that we ought to imitate his life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart.

Let, therefore, your chief endeavour be, to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ.

2. What will it avail thee to dispute sublimely of the Trinity, if thou be void of humility, and art thereby displeasing to the Trinity?

Truly, sublime words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God.

I had rather feel compunction, than know the definition thereof.

If thou didst know the whole Bible, and the sayings of all the philosophers by heart, what would all that profit thee without the love of God?

Vanity of vanities! all is vanity but to love God, and serve him only.

3. It is therefore vanity to seek after perishing riches.

It is also vanity to seek honours.

It is also vanity to follow the desires of the flesh, and to labour for that for which thou must afterward suffer grievous punishment.

It is vanity to wish to live long and to be careless to live well.

It is vanity to mind this present life, and not those things which are to come.

It is vanity to set thy love on that which speedily passeth away; and not to hasten thither, where everlasting joys remain.

CHAPTER II.

Of Thinking Humbly of Ourselves.

ALL men naturally desire to know; but what avail-eth knowledge without the fear of God?

Surely an humble husbandman that serveth God, is better than a proud philosopher, that neglecting himself, studies the course of the heavens.

He that knoweth himself is vile in his own eyes, and is not pleased with the praises of men.

If I understood all things in the world, and had not charity, what would that help me in the sight of God, who will judge me according to my deeds?

2. Cease from an inordinate desire of knowing, for therein is much distraction and deceit.

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There are many things, to know which, doth little profit to the soul.

And he is very unwise that minds any other things, than those that tend to the welfare of his soul.

Many words do not satisfy the soul: but a pure conscience giveth confidence towards God.

3. The more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest, the more grievously shalt thou be judged, unless thy life be the more holy.

Be not therefore lifted up; but rather let the knowledge given thee make thee afraid.

If thou thinkest that thou knowest much; yet there are many more things which thou knowest not.

Be not over-wise, but rather acknowledge thine own ignorance.

If thou wilt know any thing profitable, love to be unknown and of no account.

4. The highest and most profitable lesson is the true knowledge of ourselves.

It is great wisdom to esteem ourselves nothing, and to think always well and highly of others.

If thou shouldest see another openly sin, yet oughtest thou not to esteem thyself better than he.

We are all frail; but remember, none more frail than thyself.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Doctrine of Truth.

HAPPY is he whom truth itself teacheth, not by figures and words that pass away, but by an immediate communication of itself.

Our own opinion and our own sense often deceive us, and discern little.

What availeth it to dispute about hidden things, for being ignorant of which we shall not be reprov'd at the day of judgment?

It is great folly to neglect things profitable, and to think of curious or hurtful things.

2. And what have we to do with dry notions?

He, to whom the Eternal Word speaketh, is delivered from a world of vain notions.

From the One Word are all things, and all speak that One: and this is he who also speaketh unto us,

No man understandeth or judgeth rightly without him.

He to whom all things are one, who reduceth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may be stable in heart, and remain peaceable in God.

O God, the Truth, make me one with thee, in everlasting love.

I am weary of reading and hearing many things; in thee is all that I desire.

Let all creatures be silent in thy sight, speak thou alone unto me.

3. The more simple any one is, the more doth he understand without labour: because he receiveth the light of knowledge from above.

A pure, simple, and stable spirit, is not dissipated, though it be employed in many works; because it does all to the glory of God, and seeks not itself in any thing that it doth.

What hinders and troubles thee, but the unmortified affections of thine own heart.

Who hath a sharper combat than he who labour-
eth to overcome himself?

This ought to be our business, to conquer our-
selves, and daily to advance in holiness.

4. All perfection in this life hath some imperfec-
tion mixed with it; and no knowledge of ours is
without some darkness.

An humble knowledge of thyself is a surer way
to God, than a deep search after science.

Yet knowledge is not to be blamed, it being good
in itself, and ordained by God; but a good con-
science, and a virtuous life, is always to be preferred
before it.

5. O! if men bestowed as much labour in the
rooting out of vices, as they do in moving of ques-
tions, there would not be so great wickedness, nor
so much work done in the world.

Surely, at the day of judgment we shall not be
examined as to what we have read, but what we have
done: not how well we have spoken, but how
religiously we have lived.

Tell me, where are now all those doctors and
masters, with whom thou wast well acquainted,
whilst they lived and flourished in learning?

Now others possess their preferments, and perhaps
do scarce ever think of them. In their lifetime
they seemed something, but now they are not spo-
ken of.

6. O how quickly doth the glory of the world pass
away! O that their life had been answerable to
their learning! then had their study been to good
purpose.

How many perish in th's world, because they rather choose to be great than humble ; therefore they become vain in their imaginations.

He is truly great that is great in love.

He is truly great that is little in his own eyes, and that maketh no account of any height of honour.

He is truly wise that accounteth all earthly things as dung, that he may win Christ.

And he is truly learned, that doth the will of God, and forsaketh his own will.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Prudence in our Actions.

WE must not give ear to every saying or suggestion, but warily and leisurely ponder things according to the will of God.

But, alas ! such is our weakness, that we often more easily believe and speak evil of others than good.

Good men do not easily give credit to every thing one tells them ; because they know human frailty is prone to evil ; and very subject to fail in words.

2. It is great wisdom not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stiffly in thine own opinion.

It is wisdom not to believe every thing that thou hearest, nor presently to relate again to others what thou hast heard, or dost believe.

Consult with a wise and conscientious man, and seek to be instructed by a better than thyself, rather than to follow thine own inventions.

A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth him experience in many things.

The humbler one is, and more resigned unto God, the more prudent and contented shall he be in all things.

CHAPTER. V.

Of Reading the Holy Scriptures.

TRUTH, not eloquence, is to be sought for in the scriptures.

All scripture is to be read by the same spirit wherewith it was written.

We ought to read plain and devout books as willingly as high and profound ones.

Let not the authority of the writer, whether he be of great or small learning, but the love of pure truth draw thee to read.

Search not who spake this, but mark what is spoken.

2. Men pass away, but the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever

God speaks unto us sundry ways without respect of persons.

Our own curiosity often hindereth us in reading the scriptures, when we will examine and discuss that which we should rather pass over without much ado.

If thou desire to profit, read humbly, simply, and faithfully.

Enquire willingly, and hear with silence the

words of holy men ; dislike not the parables of the elders, for they are not spoken without cause.

CHAPTER VI.

Of avoiding Vain Hopes and Pride.

HE is vain that putteth his trust in man or creatures.

Be not ashamed to serve others for the love of Jesus Christ ; nor to be esteemed poor in this world.

Presume not upon thyself, but place thy hope in God.

Do what lieth in thy power, and God will assist thy good will.

Trust not in thy knowledge nor in any living creature ; but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble and humbleth the proud.

2. Glory not in wealth, nor in friends, but in God, who giveth all things, and desireth to give thee himself above all.

Value not thyself for the strength or beauty of thy body, which is spoiled and disfigured with a little sickness.

Pride not thyself in thy natural gifts or wit, lest thereby thou displease God.

3. Esteem not thyself better than others, lest in the sight of God thou be accounted worse than they.

Be not proud of thy good works ; for the judgment of God is far different from the judgment of men.

If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others.

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It hurts thee not if thou thinkest thyself worse than all men ; but it hurts thee much to prefer thyself before any one man.

The humble enjoy continual peace ; but in the heart of the proud is envy and frequent indignation.

CHAPTER VII.

That too much Familiarity is to be shunned.

LAY not thy heart open to every one ; but treat of thy affairs with the wise, and such as fear God.

Converse not much with young people and strangers.

Flatter not the rich ; neither do thou appear willingly before great persons.

Keep company with the humble and simple, with the devout and virtuous ; and confer with them of those things which may edify.

Be not familiar with any woman ; but in general commend all good women to God.

Desire to be familiar with God alone, and his word, and fly the knowledge of men.

We must have charity towards all, but familiarity with all is not expedient.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of avoiding Superfluity of Words.

FLY the tumult of the world as much as thou canst.

For we are quickly defiled and enchained with vanity.

I could wish that I had oftentimes held my peace, and that I had not been in company.

Why are we so fond of conversation, when notwithstanding we seldom return to silence without hurt of conscience.

We willingly talk of those things which we most love and desire, or of those which we feel most contrary and troublesome to us.

But, alas! oftentimes in vain, and to no end; for this outward comfort doth obstruct the inward consolation.

Therefore we must watch and pray lest our time pass away idly.

2. If it be lawful and expedient for thee to speak, speak those things that may edify.

However, devout conversation upon spiritual subjects doth greatly further our spiritual growth, especially where persons of one mind and spirit are joined together in God.

CHAPTER IX.

The obtaining of Peace, and zeal for improvement.

WE might enjoy much peace, if we would not busy ourselves with the words and deeds of others, in which we have no concern.

How can he live long in peace, that meddles with the cares of others, and little or seldom recollecteth himself within his own breast?

Blessed are the single-hearted; for they shall enjoy much peace.

2. We are too much taken up with our own passions, and too solicitous for transitory things.

We are not inflamed with a fervent desire to grow better every day; and therefore we remain cold and indifferent.

3. If we were dead into ourselves, and disengaged from low affections, then should we relish divine things.

But when any adversity befalleth us, we turn ourselves to human comfort.

4. If we would endeavour, like men of courage, to stand in the battle, we should surely feel the assistance of God from heaven; for he furnisheth us with occasions of striving, that we may conquer.

If we place our progress in religion only in outward observances, our devotion will quickly be at an end.

But let us lay the axe to the root, that, being freed from inordinate passions, we may find rest to our souls.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Usefulness of Adversity.

It is good that we have sometimes troubles and crosses; for they often make a man enter into himself, and consider that he ought not to place his trust in any worldly thing.

It is good that we be sometimes contradicted, and that men think ill of us; and this, although we do and intend well.

For then we more diligently seek God for our

inward witness, when outwardly we are contemned by men.

2. Wherefore, a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he needs not seek comforts of men.

When a man is afflicted, tempted, or troubled with evil thoughts, then he understandeth better the great need he hath of God.

3. So long as we live in this world, we cannot be without temptation.

Hence it is written in Job, "The life of man is a warfare upon earth."

Every one, therefore, ought to take care as to his own temptations, and to watch in prayer, lest he be deceived by the devil; who never sleepeth, but goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

4. Temptations are often very profitable to men, though they be troublesome and grievous; for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed.

All the saints have passed through and profited by many tribulations and temptations. And they that would not bear temptations, became rebates, and fell away.

There is no place so secret, where there are no temptations.

5. There is no man that is altogether secure from temptations whilst he liveth.

When one temptation goeth away, another cometh; and we shall ever have something to suffer.

Many seek to fly temptations, and fall more grievously into them. By flight alone we cannot overcome, but by patience and humility we conquer all our enemies.

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6. He that only avoideth them outwardly, and doth not pluck them up by the roots, shall profit little ; yea, temptations will soon return unto him, and he shall feel them worse than before.

By patience (through God's help) thou shalt more easily overcome, than by harsh and disquieting efforts in thy own strength.

Often take counsel in temptations ; and deal not roughly with him that is tempted.

7. The beginning of temptation is inconstancy of mind, and little confidence in God. For as a ship without a rudder is tossed to and fro with the waves ; so, the man that is negligent is many ways tempted.

Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man.

We know not often what we are able to do : but temptations show us what we are.

We must be watching, especially in the beginning of the temptation ; for an enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of our hearts, but be resisted without the gate at his first knock.

Wherefore, one said, " Withstand the beginning ; for an after-remedy comes too late."

First there occurreth to the mind a simple evil thought ; then, a strong imagination ; afterwards, delight ; and lastly, consent.

And so by little and little our malicious enemy getteth entrance, when he is not resisted in the beginning.

And the longer one is slack in resisting, the weaker he becomes daily, and the enemy stronger against him.

8. Some suffer the greatest temptation in the beginning of their conversion ; others, in the latter end. Others again are much troubled, almost throughout their life.

Some are but slightly tempted, according to the Wisdom which weigheth the states of men, and ordereth all things for the good of his people.

9. We ought therefore, when we are tempted, so much the more fervently to pray unto God, who surely will make with the temptation a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Let us, therefore, humble ourselves under the hand of God, in all temptations and tribulations ; for he will exalt the humble in spirit.

10. In temptations and afflictions man is proved how much he hath profited. Neither is it any such great thing, if a man be devout and fervent, when he feeleth no affliction ; but if, in time of adversity, he bears himself patiently, there is hope then of great proficiency.

Some are kept from great temptations ; that being humbled, they may never trust themselves in great matters, who are baffled in so many things.

CHAPTER XI.

Of avoiding Rash Judgments.

TURN thine ear unto thyself, and beware thou judge not the deeds of other men.

In judging of others, a man laboureth in vain, often erreth, and easily sinneth ; but in judging and examining himself he labours faithfully.

We often judge of things according as we fancy them ; for affection bereaves us easily of a right judgment.

If God were always our desire, we should not be so much troubled when our inclinations are opposed.

2. But oftentimes something lurks within which draweth us after it.

Many secretly seek themselves in their actions, but know it not.

They live in peace of mind, when things are done according to their will ; but if things succeed otherwise than their desire, they are straightway troubled.

Diversity of inclinations and opinions often cause dissensions between religious persons, between friends and countrymen.

3. And old custom is hardly broken, and no man is willing to be led farther than himself can see.

If thou dost more rely upon thine own reason, than upon Jesus Christ, late, if ever, shalt thou be illuminated.

CHAPTER XII.

Of Works done out of Charity.

THE outward work, without charity, profiteth nothing ; but whatsoever is done out of charity, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of the world, is wholly fruitful.

For God weigheth more with how much love one worketh, than how much he doeth.

2. He doeth much, that loveth much.

He doeth much, that doeth a thing well.

He doeth well that serveth his neighbour, and not his own will. Often it seemeth to be charity, when it is rather carnality; because natural inclination, self-will, hope of reward, the desire of our own interest, are motives that men are rarely free from.

3. He that hath pure and perfect charity seeketh himself in nothing; but only desireth in all things that God should be exalted. He envieth none, because he seeketh not his own satisfaction; neither rejoiceth in himself, but chooseth God only for his portion.

He attributeth nothing that is good to any man, but wholly referreth it unto God; from whom, as from the fountain, all things proceeded; and in whom finally all the saints rest.

O that he had but one spark of true charity! Then he would certainly discern that all earthly things are full of vanity.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of bearing with the Defects of others.

THOSE things that a man cannot amend in himself or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, until God orders things otherwise.

Think, that perhaps it is better so, for thy trial and patience.

2. If one that is once or twice warned will not give over, contend not with him; but commit all to God, that his will may be done, and his name hon-

cured in all his servants, who well knoweth how to turn evil into good.

Study to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they may be, for that thou thyself also hast many, which must be suffered by others.

If thou canst not make *thyself* such a one as thou wouldest, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking?

We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

We would have others exactly corrected, and yet we will not be corrected ourselves.

The liberty of others displeaseth us, and yet we will not have our own desires denied.

Thus it appears, how seldom we weigh our neighbour in the same balance with ourselves.

3. If all men were perfect, what should we have to suffer of our neighbour for God?

But now God hath thus ordered it, that we may learn to bear one another's burdens; for no man is without fault: no man but hath his burden; no man is self-sufficient; no man hath wisdom enough for himself; but we ought to bear with one another; comfort, help, instruct, and admonish one another.

Occasions of adversity best discover how great virtue each one hath.

For occasions make not a man frail, but show what he is.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Examples of the Holy Fathers.

CONSIDER the lively examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true religion shone; and thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing, which we do now.

Alas! what is our life if it be compared to theirs?

Those saints and friends of Christ served the Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and weariness, in watchings and fastings, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2. O how many and grievous tribulations suffered the apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the rest that would follow the steps of Christ! They hated their lives in this world, that they might possess their souls in everlasting life.

O how strict and self-renouncing a life led those holy fathers in the wilderness! How long and grievous temptations suffered they! How often were they assaulted by the enemy! What frequent and fervent prayers offered they to God! How rigorous an abstinence did they daily use! How great zeal and care they had of their spiritual proficiency! How strong a combat had they for the overcoming of their lust! How pure and upright an intention did they preserve unto God!

All the day they laboured, and spent part of the night in prayer; although even while they laboured, they did not cease from mental prayer.

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3. They spent all their time usefully ; all their hours of devotion seemed short ; and by reason of the great sweetness they felt in contemplations, they forgot the necessity of corporal refreshments.

They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends, and kinsfolk ; they desired to have nothing of the world ; they took no more of any thing than was necessary for the sustenance of life.

They were poor in earthly things, but rich in grace.

Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly were refreshed with divine consolation.

4. They were strangers to the world, but friends to God.

They seemed to themselves as nothing, and were despised by the world ; but they were precious in the eyes of God.

They were grounded in humility, walked in love and patience, and therefore profited daily in spirit.

Help me, O Lord God, in thy holy service, and grant that I may now, this day, begin perfectly ; for that which I have done hitherto is nothing.

Much diligence is necessary to him that will profit much.

If he that firmly purposeth often faileth, what shall he do that seldom or feebly purposeth any thing ?

It may fall out sundry ways that we break our resolution ; and a little omission of spiritual exercises seldom passes without some loss.

The purpose of just men depends not so much upon their own wisdom as upon the grace of God,

on whom they always rely in whatsoever they take in hand. For man doth purpose. But God doth dispose ; neither is the way of man in himself.

5. If any accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted, either for some act of piety, or proof to thy brother, it may easily afterwards be recovered again.

But to omit it out of sloth, or carelessness, is very blameable, and will be found pernicious.

We must diligently search into, and regulate, both the outward and inward man ; because both contribute to our advancement.

Gird thy loins as a man, against the assaults of the devil ; bridle thy appetite, and thou shalt the more easily bridle all the motions of the flesh.

Be thou at no time idle ; but either be reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or endeavouring something for the public good.

“ Blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord cometh, he shall find watching : Verily, I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods.”

CHAPTER XV.

Of the Love of Solitude and Silence.

SEEK a convenient time to retire into thyself.

Meddle not with curiosities.

Read such things as may rather yield compunction of heart, than busy thy head.

If thou wilt withdraw thyself from superfluous talk and useless visits, as also from hearkening after news and rumours, thou shalt find sufficient leisure to meditate on good things.

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2. One said, "As often as I have been among men, I returned like a man;" and this we often find true, when we have been long in company.

It is easier not to speak at all, than not to speak more than we should.

It is easier to keep at home, than to be sufficiently upon our guard when we are abroad.

He, therefore, that intends to attain to inward and spiritual things, must with Jesus, retire from the multitude.

No man safely goes abroad, but he who is willing to stay at home.

No man can speak safely, but he who is willing to hold his peace.

No man ruleth safely, but he that is willing to be ruled.

No man safely commands, but he that hath learned readily to obey.

No man safely rejoiceth, unless he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience.

And yet the security of the saints was always full of the fear of God.

Neither were they less careless and humble in themselves, because they shone outwardly with grace and great virtues.

3. Those have often, through confidence in themselves, fallen into the greatest dangers, who have been in the greatest esteem among men.

Wherefore, it is more profitable to many not to be altogether free from temptations, lest they should be too secure; lest they should be puffed up with pride, or too freely inclined to worldly comforts.

O how good a conscience would he keep, that would never seek after transitory joys, or entangle himself with the things of this world !

O how great peace and quietness would he possess that would cut off all vain solicitude, and think only upon divine things, and such as are profitable for his soul !

If thou desirest compunction of heart, enter into thy closet, and shut out the tumults of the world, according to the advice of the Psalmist, "Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still." (Ps. iv. 5.)

In thy closet thou shalt find, what abroad thou often lovest. The more thou frequentest thy closet, the more thou wilt like it ; the less thou comest thereunto, the more thou wilt loathe it.

If in the beginning of thy conversion thou passeth much time in thy closet, it will afterwards be to thee a dear friend and pleasant comfort.

4. In silence and in stillness a religious soul profiteth, and learneth the hidden truth of the Holy Scriptures.

There she findeth rivers of joys, and may be so much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the farther off she liveth from all worldly tumult.

5. Why art thou desirous to see that which is unlawful for thee to enjoy ! For the world passeth away, and the desires thereof.

Our sinful desires draw us to rove abroad ; but when the time is passed, what carriest thou home with thee, but a burdened conscience, and a dissipated heart ?

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A merry going out often bringeth a mournful return, and a joyful evening a sad morning.

So all carnal joys enter pleasantly, but in the end bite and sting to death.

What canst thou see elsewhere, which thou canst not see here? Behold the heavens and the earth, and all the elements; for of these are all things created.

6. What canst thou see any where that can long continue under the sun?

Thou thinkest, perhaps, to satisfy thyself? but thou canst never attain it.

Shouldest thou see all the things of this world, what were it but a vain sight?

Lift up thine eyes to God in the highest, and pray to him to pardon all thy sins.

Leave vain things to the vain; but be thou intent upon those things which God commandeth thee.

Shut thy door upon thee; and call unto thee Jesus thy beloved. Stay with him in thy closet; for thou shalt not find so great peace any where else.

Hadst thou not gone abroad, and hearkened to idle rumours, thou mightest the better have remained in peace; as long as thou delightest to hear novelties, thou must endure trouble of heart.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Compunction of Heart.

If thou wilt make any progress, keep thyself in the fear of God, and use not too much liberty.

Keep all thy senses under discipline, and give not thyself over to trifling mirth.

2. The levity of our minds, and want of concern for our faults, make us lose the sense of our inward state, and often laugh when we have cause to weep.

There is no true liberty, nor right gladness, but in the fear of God, and a good conscience.

Happy is he that can avoid all distracting impediments, and recollect himself in holy compunction.

Happy is he that can abandon all that may defile or burden his conscience.

Resist manfully: one custom overcometh another.

3. Busy not thyself in matters which appertain to others; neither trouble thyself with the affairs of thy betters.

Still have an eye to thyself first, and be sure to admonish thyself, before any of thy friends.

If thou hast not the favour of men, be not grieved at it; but grieve that thou dost not carry thyself so warily and circumspectly as becometh the servant of God.

It is often better and safer that a man hath not many consolations in this life, especially worldly ones. But that we have not any, or seldom, divine consolations, is our own fault, because we do not altogether forsake vain comforts.

4. Didst thou oftener think of thy death, than of thy living long, there is no question but thou wouldest be more zealous to amend.

I believe thou wouldest willingly undergo any labour, or sorrow, or austerity, if thou didst consider within thyself the pains of a future state.

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But because these things enter not into the heart, and we still love the things of the world, therefore we remain cold and slothful.

Miserable thou art, wheresoever thou be, or whithersoever thou turnest, unless thou turn to God.

Who is in the best case? He who can suffer something for God.

O brother, quit not thy hope of profiting in spiritual things. There is yet time, the hour is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou defer thy good purpose? Arise, begin this instant, and say, Now is the time to be doing, now is the time to be striving, now is the time to amend.

But unless thou doest violence to thyself, thou shalt never get the victory over sin.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Meditation of Death.

THIS life will soon be at an end! Consider, therefore, how thy affairs stand as to the next.

Man is here to-day, to-morrow he is soon forgotten.

Thou shouldest so order thyself in all thy thoughts, and all thy actions, as if thou wert to die to-day.

Hadst thou a clear conscience, thou couldest not fear death. It were better to avoid sin, than to flee death.

If thou art not prepared to-day, how wilt thou be to-morrow? To-morrow is uncertain, and how knowest thou that thou shalt live till to-morrow?

2. What availeth it to live long, when we are so little the better.

Alas! long life does not always mend us; but often increaseth guilt.

O that we had spent but one day well in this world.

3. When it is morning, think thou mayest die before night.

When evening comes dare not to promise thyself the next morning.

Be, therefore, always in readiness; and so live, that death may never take thee unprepared.

Many die suddenly, and when they look not for it; for "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." (Mat. xxiv. 44.)

When that last hour shall come, thou wilt have a far different opinion of thy whole life.

4. How wise and happy is he, that laboureth to be such in his life, as he wisheth to be found at the hour of his death.

Whilst thou art in health, thou mayest do much good, but when thou art sick, I know not what thou wilt be able to do.

Few by sickness grow better: and they who travel much are seldom sanctified.

5. Trust not in friends and kindred, neither put off the care of thy soul till hereafter; for men will sooner forget thee than thou art aware of.

If thou art not careful for thyself now, who will be careful for thee hereafter?

The time present is very precious; now is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time.

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But, alas! that thou shouldest spend thy time no better here, where thou mightest purchase life eternal! The time will come, when thou shalt desire one day or hour to amend in; and I cannot say it will be granted thee.

6. Ah, fool! why dost thou think to live long, when thou canst not promise to thyself one day.

How many have been deceived, and suddenly snatched away!

How often dost thou hear, such a man is slain, another is drowned, a third has broke his neck with a fall; this man died eating, and that playing!

One perished by fire, another by sword, another of the plague, another was slain by thieves. Thus death is the end of all; and man's life suddenly passeth away, like a shadow.

7. Who shall remember thee when thou art dead? Do, do now, my beloved, whatsoever thou art able to do: for thou knowest not when thou shalt die, nor yet what shall be after thy death.

Now, while thou hast time, lay up for thyself everlasting riches.

Think of nothing but the salvation of thy soul; care for nothing but the things of God.

8. Keep thyself as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, who has nothing to do with the affairs of this world.

Keep thy heart free, and lifted up to God, because thou hast here no abiding city. Send thither thy daily prayers, and sighs, and tears, that after death thy spirit may happily pass to the Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of Judgment, and the Punishment of Sin.

IN all things remember the end, and how thou wilt be able to stand before that severe Judge, from whom nothing is hid ; which is not pacified with gifts, nor admitteth any excuses ; but will judge according to right.

O wretched and foolish sinner, who sometimes hast feared the countenance of an angry man ; what answer wilt thou make to God who knoweth all thy wickedness ?

Why dost thou not provide for thyself against that great day of judgment, when no man can excuse or answer for another, but every one shall have enough to answer for himself ?

2. What is it which that infernal fire feeds upon but thy sins ?

The more thou sparest thyself now, and followest the flesh ; so much the more hereafter shall be thy punishment, and thou stowest up greater fuel for the flame

In what thing a man hath sinned, in the same shall he be punished.

There is no quiet, no comfort for the damned there. Here we have some intermission of our labours, and enjoy the comfort of our friends.

Be now solicitous and sorrowful because of thy sins, that at the day of judgment thou mayest be secure with the blessed.

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For then shall the righteous stand with great boldness before such as have vexed and oppressed them.

Then shall he stand to judge, who doth now humbly submit himself to the judgment of others.

Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence ; but the proud shall be compassed with fear on every side.

3. Then will it appear, that he was wise in this world, who had learned to be a fool and despised for Christ's sake.

Then shall every affliction, patiently undergone, delight us ; and the mouth of iniquity shall be stopped.

Then shall the devout rejoice, and the profane mourn.

Then shall he more rejoice, that hath mortified his flesh, than he that hath abounded in all pleasure.

Then shall the poor attire shine gloriously, and the precious robes appear vile.

4. Suppose thou hadst hitherto lived always in honour and delights ; what would this avail thee, if thou wert to die this instant ? All, therefore, is vanity, but to love God and serve him only.

For he that loveth God with all his heart, is neither afraid of death nor judgment, nor hell.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the Zealous Amendment of our whole Life.

WHEN one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once humbly

prostrate himself in prayer, and said, "O! if I knew that I should persevere!" he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said, "If thou didst know it, what wouldest thou do? Do what thou wouldest do then, and thou shalt be safe."

And being herewith comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and his anxiety ceased:

Neither had he any mind to search curiously farther what should befall him; but rather laboured to understand what was the perfect and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishment of every good work.

2. "Hope in the Lord, and do good," saith the Prophet, "so shalt thou inherit the land, and thou shalt be fed."

One thing there is that draweth many back from a spiritual progress and diligent amendment; the hour of difficulty, or the labour of the combat.

But they improve most in virtue, that endeavour most to overcome those things which are grievous and contrary to them.

For there a man improveth more, and obtaineth greater grace, where he more overcometh himself and mortifieth himself in spirit.

3. Gather some profit to thy soul wheresoever thou be: so if thou seest or hearest of any good examples, stir up thyself to the imitation thereof.

But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproof, beware thou dost not the same. And, if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it.

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and have always before thine eyes the remembrance of thy saviour crucified.

Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking unto the life of Jesus Christ, seeing thou hast yet no more endeavoured to conform thyself unto him, though thou hast wasted a long time in the ways of God.

A religious person that exercises himself seriously and devoutly in the most holy life and passion of our Lord, shall there abundantly find what is necessary and profitable for him; neither shall he need seek any better thing out of Jesus.

O if Jesus crucified would come into our hearts, how quickly and fully should we be instructed in all truth!

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Inward Life.

"THE kingdom of God is within you," saith the Lord. Turn thee with thy whole heart unto the Lord, and forsake this wretched world and thy soul shall find rest.

Learn to despise exterior things, and to give thyself to the interior; and thou shalt perceive the kingdom of God to come unto thee. For the kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

2. O faithful soul, make ready thy heart for this Bridegroom, that he may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and dwell within thee !

For he saith, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him." Give, therefore admittance unto Christ, and deny entrance to all others.

When thou hast Christ, thou art rich, and he will suffice thee. He will be thy faithful helper in all things, so as thou shalt not need to trust in men.

3. For men are soon changed, and quickly fail ; but Christ remaineth for ever, and is with us even unto the end.

We ought not to put trust in man, frail and mortal as he is, though he be friendly and serviceable ; nor should we be grieved, although he cross and oppose us.

They that to-day take thy part, to-morrow may be against thee ; and so on the contrary : they often turn like the wind.

Put thy whole trust in God, let him be thy fear and thy love : he will answer for thee, and do in all things what is best.

Thou hast not here an abiding city ; and where-soever thou be, thou art a stranger and pilgrim ; neither shalt thou ever have rest, unless thou be intimately united unto Christ.

4. Why dost thou here gaze about, since this is not the place of thy rest ? Heaven ought to be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be looked upon as they forward thy journey thither.

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them. Beware thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish.

Let thy thoughts be on the Highest, and thy prayer directed unto Christ without ceasing.

If thou canst not contemplate on high and heavenly things, rest thyself in the passion of Christ, and dwell willingly in his holy wounds.

For if thou flee devoutly unto the wounds and precious marks of the Lord Jesus, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation; neither wilt thou regard being despised of men, and wilt easily hear words of detraction.

5. Christ was also despised of men, and in his greatest necessity forsaken by his acquaintance and friends.

Christ chose to suffer and be despised: and darest thou complain of any thing?

Christ had adversaries and slanderers: and wilt thou have all men thy friends and benefactors?

How shall thy patience be crowned, if no adversity happen unto thee?

If thou wilt suffer nothing, how wilt thou be the friend of Christ?

Suffer with Christ, and for Christ, if thou desirest to reign with Christ.

6. If thou hadst but once entered into Jesus, then wouldest thou not be careful about thine own advantage or disadvantage, but wouldest rather rejoice at slanders cast upon thee: for the love of Jesus maketh a man despise himself.

A lover of Jesus, a true inward Christian, free from inordinate affections, can freely turn himself to God, and lift himself above himself.

7. He that relishes all things as they are, and not as they are esteemed, is truly wise, and taught by God.

He that can live inwardly, and make small reckoning of outward things, neither requireth places, nor attendeth times, for the exercise of his devotions.

An interior man soon recollecteth himself, because he is never wholly intent upon outward things.

He is not hindered by outward labour or business; but as things fall out, so he suiteth himself unto them.

He that hath well ordered and disposed all things within, careth not for the perverse carriage of men.

So much is a man hindered and distracted, by how much he cleaveth to outward things.

8. If all went well with thee, and thou wert well purified, all things would tend to thy good.

But, therefore, many things displease and trouble thee, because thou art not yet dead unto thyself, nor separated from all earthly things.

Nothing so defleth and entangleth the heart of man, as the impure love of creatures.

CHAPTER II.

Of Humble Submission.

MIND not much who is with thee, or who is against thee; but take care that God may be with thee in every thing thou doest.

Keep a good conscience, and God will defend thee. For whom God will help, no man can hurt.

If thou canst hold thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see the salvation of the Lord.

He knoweth the time and manner how to deliver thee ; and therefore thou oughtest to resign thyself unto him.

It belongs to God to help and deliver us from all shame. It is often profitable for the keeping us humble, that others know and apprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himself for his faults, he easily pacifieth those that are offended with him.

God protecteth and delivereth the humble ; unto the humble man he inclineth himself ; unto the humble he giveth great grace ; and after his humiliation he raiseth him up unto glory.

Unto the humble he revealeth his secrets ; and sweetly draweth him unto himself.

The humble person, though he suffer shame, is yet in peace ; for that he resteth in God and not in the world.

Do not think that thou hast profited any thing, unless thou esteem thyself inferior to all.

CHAPTER III.

Of a Good and Peaceable Man.

FIRST, keep thyself in peace, and then mayest thou pacify others.

A peaceable man doeth more good than a learned one.

A passionate man turneth good into evil, and easily believeth the worst.

A peaceable man turneth all things into good.

He that is in peace is not suspicious of any ; but he that is discontented, is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet.

He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak, and omitteth that which he ought to do. He considereth what others are bound to do ; and neglects that which he is bound to do himself.

First, therefore, have a careful zeal over thyself, and then show thyself zealous for thy neighbour's good.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse thine own deeds, and thou wilt not receive the excuses of others. It were more just to accuse thyself, and excuse thy brother. If thou wilt be borne with, bear also with others.

Behold, how far thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not to be angry with any, but one's self. It is no great matter to live peaceably with the good and gentle ; for every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those that are of his own mind :

But to be able to live peaceably with unquiet and perverse men, or such as cross us, is a great grace.

3. Some there are, that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace also with others.

And there are some, that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace ; who are troublesome to others, but always more troublesome to themselves.

And others there are, that keep themselves in peace, and labour to bring others into peace.

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Our whole peace in this life consisting rather in humble suffering, than in not feeling adversities.

He that knows best how to suffer, will best keep himself in peace. He is a conqueror of himself, a lord of the world, a friend of Christ, and an heir of heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

Of a pure Mind, and simple Intention.

SIMPLICITY and purity are the two wings by which a man is lifted above all earthly things.

Simplicity is in the intention ; purity in the affection : simplicity tends to God ; purity apprehends and tastes him.

No good action will hinder thee, if thou be inwardly free from inordinate affection.

If thou intend and seek nothing but the will of God, and the good of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internal liberty.

If thy heart were right, then every creature would be a looking-glass of life, and a book of holy doctrine.

There is no creature so little and abject, that represents not the goodness of God.

2. If thou wert inwardly pure, thou wouldest see and understand all things without an impediment.

A pure heart penetrateth heaven and hell. Such as every one is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly.

If there be joy in the world, surely a man of a pure heart possesseth it. And if there be any where tribulation and affliction, an evil conscience feels it.

As iron put into the fire loseth its rust, and becometh all bright like fire ; so he that wholly turneth himself unto God is purified from all sin, and changed into the likeness of God.

3. When a man beginneth to grow lukewarm, then he is afraid of a little labour ; but when he once beginneth to overcome himself, then he esteemeth those things light, which before seemed grievous unto him.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Consideration of One's-self.

WE should not trust too much in ourselves, because we have often neither grace nor understanding.

There is but little light in us, and that we quickly lose by negligence.

We reprehend small things in others, and pass over greater in ourselves.

We quickly feel and weigh what we suffer from others ; but we mind not what others suffer from us.

He that doeth well, and rightly considers his own work, will find little cause to judge hardly of another.

2. The inward Christian preferreth the care of himself before all other cares.

He that diligently attendeth unto himself, easily holds his peace concerning others.

Thou wilt never be inwardly religious, unless thou pass over other men's matters, and look especially to thyself.

If thou attend wholly unto God and thyself, thou wilt be little moved with whatsoever thou seest abroad.

Where art thou, when thou art not with thyself? and when thou hast run over all, what hast thou profited, if thou hast neglected thyself.

If thou desirest peace of mind, thou must reject all other cares, and look only to thyself.

3. Thou shalt profit much if thou keep thyself free from all temporal cares.

Thou shalt greatly fail if thou esteem any thing of this world.

Let nothing be great, nothing high, nothing pleasing to thee, but only God himself, or that which is of God.

Esteem all comfort vain which proceedeth from any creature. A soul that loveth God, despiseth all things but God.

God alone, who is everlasting, immense, filling all things, is the comfort of the soul, and the true joy of the heart.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Joy of a good Conscience.

THE glory of a good man is the testimony of a good conscience.

Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy.

Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart condemn thee not. Never rejoice, but when thou hast done well.

Sinners have never true joy, nor feel inward peace ; because "There is no peace to the wicked," saith the Lord.

2. To glory in tribulation, is no hard thing for him that loveth ; for to glory so, is to glory in the cross of our Lord.

That glory is short, which is given and received from men. Sorrow always accompanieth the glory of the world.

The glory of the good is in their consciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladness of the just is of God, and their joy is of the truth.

He enjoyeth great peace of mind, that careth neither for the praise nor for the dispraise of men.

3. He will easily be content whose conscience is pure.

Thou art not the more holy, though thou art praised ; nor the more abject, though thou art dispraised.

What thou art, thou art ; neither canst thou be said to be greater than thou art in the sight of God.

If thou considerest what thou art within, thou wilt not care what men say of thee.

Man seeth the face ; but God looketh into the heart.

Man considereth the deeds ; but God weigheth the intention.

To do always well, and to disesteem himself, is a sign of a humble soul.

4. He that seeketh no witness for himself without, doth show that he hath wholly committed himself unto God.

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proved," saith St. Paul, "but whom God commendeth."

To walk inwardly with God, and not to love any thing without, is the state of a spiritual man.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Love of Jesus.

BLESSED is he that understands what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for Jesus.

Thou oughtest to leave what thou hast loved hitherto, for the sake of him ; for he will be loved alone.

The love of things created is deceitful and inconstant : the love of Jesus is faithful and constant.

He that cleaveth unto a creature, shall fall when it falls ; he that embraceth Jesus, shall stand firmly for ever.

Love him, and keep him for thy friend, who, when all go away, will not forsake thee. Thou must one day be left of all, whether thou wilt or not.

2. Keep close to Jesus, both in life and death, and commit thyself unto his faithfulness, who, when all fail, can alone help.

Thy Beloved will not admit of a rival ; but will have thy heart alone, and sit like a king in his own throne.

Whatsoever affection thou reposest in men out of Jesus, is all no better than lost.

Trust not, nor lean upon, a broken reed ; for all flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof shall wither away.

3. Thou shalt quickly be deceived, if thou regard-
est only the outward appearance of men.

If in them thou seekest comfort and profit, thou
shalt often feel loss.

If thou seekest Jesus in all things, thou shalt
surely find him.

If thou seekest thyself, thou shalt also find thy-
self, but to thy own destruction.

For if a man do not seek Jesus, he doeth more
hurt to himself, than the world and all his adversa-
ries could do.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of a familiar Friendship with Jesus.

WHEN Jesus is present, all is well ; but when he is
absent, every thing is hard.

When Jesus speaketh not inwardly, we have no
true comfort ; but if he speak but one word, we feel
much consolation.

Did not Mary presently rise from the place where
she wept when Martha said unto her, " The Master
is come, and calleth for thee."

Happy the hour, when Jesus calleth from tears to
spiritual joy !

How dry and cold art thou without Jesus ! How
foolish and vain, if thou desirest any thing out of
him !

Is not this a greater loss, than if thou shouldst
lose the whole world ?

2. What can the world profit thee without Jesus ?

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To be without Jesus, is a grievous hell, and to be with him, a sweet paradise.

If Jesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee.

He that findeth Jesus, findeth a good treasure, yea, a good above all goods ; and he that loseth Jesus, loseth too much, and more than the whole world.

He is most poor that liveth without Jesus ; and he is most rich that is well with him.

3. It is great skill to know how to converse with Jesus, and great wisdom to know and keep him.

Be humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will stay with thee.

Thou mayest soon drive away Jesus, if thou turnest aside to outward things. And if thou shouldest drive him away, unto whom wilt thou flee ? and what friend wilt thou seek ?

Without a friend thou canst not live well : and if Jesus be not above all friends unto thee, thou shalt be very sorrowful and desolate.

Thou doest, therefore, foolishly, if thou dost trust or rejoice in any other. It is better for thee to have all the world against thee, than Jesus offended with thee.

Therefore, of all things that are dear to thee, let Jesus alone be peculiarly thy beloved. Love all for Jesus, but Jesus for himself.

Jesus Christ alone is to be beloved ; who alone is faithful above all friends.

For him, and in him, let as well friends and foes be dear unto thee ; pray to him for all these, that all may know and love him.

Never desire to be commended ; for that appertaineth unto God. Neither do thou desire that the heart of any should be set on thee ; nor do thou set thy heart on any : but let Jesus be in thee, and in every good man.

4. Be free and pure within, and entangle not thy heart with any creature. And truly, unless thou be prevented and drawn by his grace, thou shalt never attain to this, to forsake and cast off all, that thou mayest be united to him alone.

For when the grace of God cometh unto man, then he has power to do all things ; and when that retires, he is poor and weak, and, as it were, left only to affliction.

Yet in this thou oughtest not to despair ; but to resign thyself to the will of God, and to bear all things that befall thee for the Glory of Christ : for after winter followeth summer, and after a storm a great calm.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Want of all Comfort.

It is not hard to despise human comfort when we have divine.

He rideth easily enough, whom the grace of God carrieth. And what marvel if *he* feel no burden who is borne up by the Almighty ?

2. We are always willing to have something for our comfort ; and a man doth hardly put off himself. The holy martyr, St. Lawrence, overcame the

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world, because he despised whatsoever was delightful in it ; and for the love of Christ, patiently suffered Sixtus to be taken from him, whom he most dearly loved.

He overcame, therefore, the love of man by the love of the Creator : and he rather chose the divine good pleasure than human comfort.

See thou also learn to forsake thy intimate and beloved friend, for the love of God. Be not grieved when thou art forsaken by a friend, knowing that we all, at length, must be separated from one another.

When a man trusteth in himself, he easily slideth into human comfort ; but a true lover of Christ betakes not himself to human comfort, but rather sustains hard exercises and great labour for Christ.

3. When, therefore, spiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it thankfully ; but know it is the gift of God, not thy desert.

Be not puffed up, neither do thou presume vainly ; but be rather more humble for the gift, and more wary in all thy actions.

4. David in the presence of the divine grace, said, "I said in my prosperity, I shall never be removed." But, in the absence of it, having experienced what was in himself, he adds, "Thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled."

Yet doth he not despair, but more earnestly prayeth unto the Lord, and saith, "Then cried I unto thee, O Lord ; and gat to my God right humbly."

Lastly, he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying, "The Lord

hath heard me, and taken pity on me: the Lord is become my helper."

But wherein? "Thou hast turned," saith he, "my heaviness into joy, thou hast compassed me about with gladness."

5. Whereupon, therefore, can I hope, or wherein ought I to trust, but in the great mercy of God alone, and in the only hope of everlasting grace?

For whether I enjoy the presence of good men, or religious brethren, or faithful friends, or holy books, or excellent treatises, or sweet songs and hymns, all these help little, and have little relish, without the grace of God.

At such a time there is no better remedy than patience, and renouncing my own will, according to the will of God.

Temptation going before, is wont to be a sign of ensuing comfort.

And to those that are proved by temptations, heavenly comfort is promised. "To him that shall overcome," saith he, "will I give to eat of the tree of Life."

6. Divine comfort is given, that a man may be stronger to bear adversity. There followeth temptation, lest he should grow proud thereof.

The devil sleepeth not, neither is the flesh as yet dead; therefore cease not to prepare thyself to the battle; for on thy right hand and on thy left are enemies that never rest.

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CHAPTER X.

Of Thankfulness for the Grace of God.

WHY seekest thou rest, since thou art born to labour.

Dispose thyself to patience, rather than to comfort ; and to the bearing of the cross, rather than to joy.

What worldly man would not willingly receive spiritual joy and comfort, if he could always have it. For spiritual comfort exceeds all the delights of the world, and all the pleasures of the flesh.

2. False freedom of mind and trust in ourselves, are very contrary to heavenly visitations.

God doeth well in giving thee consolation : but man doeth evil in not returning all again unto God with thanksgiving. And therefore, the gifts of grace cannot flow in because we are not thankful to the Giver.

For grace ever attendeth him that is thankful ; and from the proud shall be taken that which is given to the humble.

I willingly accept that grace, whereby I may ever become more humble and careful, and more ready to renounce myself.

Give unto God that which is God's, and ascribe unto thyself that which is thine own : that is, give thanks to God for his grace ; and acknowledge that nothing is thine, but only sin, and the punishment due thereto.

3. Set thyself always in the lowest place ; and the highest shall be given thee : for thou canst not be in the highest till thou hast been in the lowest.

The chief saints before God are the least in their own eyes : and how much the more glorious, so much the more humble.

4. Be therefore thankful for the least gift ; so shalt thou receive greater. If thou consider the worth of the Giver, no gift will seem little or of mean esteem. For that is not little which is given by the most high God.

Yea, if he should give punishment and stripes, we ought to be grateful ; for he doth it always for our welfare, whatsoever he permitteth to befall us.

He that desireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankful for the grace given, and patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may return. Let him be wary and humble, lest he lose it.

CHAPTER XI.

That there are few who love the Cross of Christ.

JESUS hath many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of his cross.

He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence.

All desire to rejoice with him, but few will suffer for him.

Many praise and bless him, as long as they receive

comforts from him. But if he leave them but awhile, they fall into complaint or dejection.

2. But they that love Jesus for Jesus, bless him in all tribulation, as well as in the greatest comfort.

And although he should never give them comfort, yet they would ever praise him, and always give him thanks.

3. O how powerful is the pure love of Jesus ! But where may one be found that is willing to serve God gratis ?

4. It is hard to find any one that is stripped of the love of all earthly things.

For where is any one to be found that is indeed free from all affection to creatures.

If a man should give all his substance, yet it is as nothing. And if he should do great penances, yet are they but little. And if he should attain to all knowledge, he is yet far off.

And if he should be very fervent in devotion, yet there is wanting one thing which is most necessary for him.

What is that ? That when he hath done all which he knoweth ought to be done, he knows that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not think that a great thing, which others may think so : but according to truth let him affirm himself to be an unprofitable servant ; as our Saviour hath said, " When ye have done all things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."

Yet no man richer, no man more powerful, no man more free, than he that can leave all things, and set himself in the lowest place.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Royal Way of the Holy Cross.

THIS speech seemeth hard to many, "Renounce thyself, take up thy cross, and follow Jesus."

But it will be much harder to hear that word, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

This sign of the cross shall be in heaven, when our Lord shall come to judgment. Then all the servants of the cross shall draw near unto Christ, the Judge, with great confidence.

2. Why, therefore, fearest thou to take up thy cross, which leadeth to a kingdom?

In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection against our enemies, in the cross is heavenly sweetness, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit, in the cross is the height of virtue, in the cross is the perfection of holiness.

There is no salvation of the soul, nor hope of everlasting life, but in the cross.

Take up therefore, thy cross; and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

He is gone before, bearing his cross; and he died for thee on the cross, that thou mayest also bear thy cross, and desire to die on the cross with him.

For if thou die with him, thou shalt also live with him; and if thou be his companion in pain, thou shalt be partaker with him in glory.

3. Behold, in the cross all doth consist, and all

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lieth in our dying upon it: for there is no other way to life, and to true inward peace, but the way of the holy cross.

Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy cross.

Dispose all things according to thy will and judgment; yet thou shalt ever find, that thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly, or against thy will, and so thou shalt ever find the cross.

For either thou shalt feel pain in thy body or in thy soul.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be tried of God, sometimes thou shalt be exercised by thy neighbour; and often thou shalt be irksome to thyself:

Neither canst thou be delivered by any other remedy; but so long as it pleaseth God, thou must bear it.

For God will have thee learn to suffer tribulation; and to subject thyself wholly to him.

No man hath so cordial a feeling for the passion of Christ, as he who hath suffered the like himself.

The cross, therefore, is always ready, and every where waits for thee.

Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou runnest; for wheresoever thou goest, thou carriest thyself with thee, and shalt ever find thyself.

Both above and below, without and within, which way soever thou dost turn thee, every where thou shalt find the cross; and every where thou must have patience, if thou wilt enjoy an everlasting crown.

5. If thou bear the cross willingly, it will bear thee. If thou bear it unwillingly, thou increasest thy load, and yet thou must bear it. If thou cast away one cross, thou shalt find another, and perhaps a more heavy one.

6. Thinkest thou to escape that which no man could ever avoid? Which of the saints in the world was ever without crosses?

Verily, Jesus Christ our Lord was never one hour without suffering, so long as he lived: Christ, (saith he,) ought to suffer, and rise again from the dead, and so enter into his glory.

And dost thou seek any other way than his royal way, which is the way of the holy cross?

7. Indeed it is not of man to bear and love the cross, to keep the body under, to flee honours, to suffer reproaches gladly, to despise himself, and to rejoice in being despised.

If thou consider thyself, thou art able to perform nothing of this. But if thou trust in the Lord, strength shall be given thee from heaven, and the world and the flesh shall be made subject to thy command.

Neither shalt thou fear the devil, if thou art armed with faith.

8. Set, therefore, thyself like a faithful servant of Christ, to bear manfully the cross of thy Lord.

Prepare thyself to bear adversities; for so it will be with thee wheresoever thou be; and so surely thou wilt find it wheresoever thou hidest thyself.

Drink of the cup of the Lord gladly, if thou wilt be his friend. As for comforts, leave them to God; let him do therein as shall best please him.

Set thou thyself to suffer tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts; for the sufferings of this life are not worthy of the glory which is to come, although thou alone couldst suffer them all.

9. When thou shalt come to this, that tribulation shall be sweet unto thee for Christ, then think it well with thee; for thou hast found a paradise upon earth.

As long as it is grievous to thee to suffer, so long shalt thou be ill at ease, and the tribulation thou fleest shall follow thee every where.

Although thou hadst been wrapped into the third heaven with Paul, thou wouldst not be secure from suffering; "I" (saith Jesus,) "will show him how great things he must suffer for my name."

It remaineth, therefore, that thou suffer, if thou wilt love Jesus and perpetually serve him.

10. O that thou wert worthy to suffer something for the name of Jesus! How great glory would it be to thee! how great edification also to thy neighbour! For all commend patience, though few are willing to suffer.

With great reason thou oughtest to be willing to suffer a little for Christ, since many suffer far greater things for the world.

11. Know for certain, the more every one dieth to himself, the more he liveth to God. No man is fit to attain unto heavenly things, unless he submit to suffer for Christ.

Nothing is more grateful unto God, nothing more wholesome to thee, than to suffer willingly for Christ.

And if it were left to thy choice, thou shouldest rather wish to suffer adversities for Christ, than to enjoy many comforts; because hereby thou shouldest be more like Christ, and more conformable to all the saints.

For our proficiency consisteth not in many sweetnesses and comforts, but rather in suffering afflictions.

12. If any thing had been more profitable to the salvation of man than suffering, Christ surely would have shown it by word and example.

But he plainly exhorteth all that follow him to the bearing of the cross, and saith, "If any man will come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

So that, when we have read and searched all, let this be the last conclusion, that by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

Of the inward Speech of Christ unto a faithful Soul.

Christian.—I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak in me.

Blessed is the soul that heareth the Lord speak in her, and receiveth from his mouth the word of comfort.

Blessed are those ears that receive the whispers of the divine voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world.

Blessed indeed are those ears that hearken not to the voice which soundeth outwardly, but unto the truth which teacheth inwardly.

Blessed are the eyes which are shut to outward things, but open to those that are internal. Blessed are they that delight to be at leisure for God, and rid themselves of all worldly impediments.

2. Consider these things, my soul, and shut up the doors of thy sensual desires, that thou mayest hear what the Lord God speaketh in thee.

Christ.—I am thy Peace, thy Life, and thy Salvation. Keep thyself with me, and thou shalt find peace. Leave all transitory, and seek things everlasting. What are all temporal things, but snares? and what do all creatures avail thee, if thou be forsaken by thy Creator?

Forsake, therefore, all earthly things, and labour to please thy Creator, and be faithful unto him, that thou mayest attain true happiness.

CHAPTER II.

That Truth speaketh inwardly, without Noise of Words.

Christian.—SPEAK, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

I am thy servant: grant me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth. Let thy speech distil as the dew.

The children of Israel said unto Moses, "Speak thou unto us, and we will hear thee: let not the Lord speak unto us, lest we die."

Not so, Lord, not so, I beseech thee; but rather with the prophet Samuel, I humbly and earnestly entreat, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

2. Let not Moses speak unto me, nor any of the Prophets; but do thou rather speak, O Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener of all the prophets: for thou alone, without them, canst perfectly instruct me; but they, without thee, can prophecy nothing.

They, indeed, may sound forth words, but they cannot give spirit. They speak well; but if thou be silent, they inflame not the heart. They teach the letter, but thou openest the sense. They bring forth mysteries, but thou unlockest the meaning of them.

They declare thy commandments, but thou helpst to fulfil them.

They show the way, but thou givest strength to walk in it.

They work only outwardly, but thou instructest and enlightenest the heart.

They water, but thou givest the increase.

They make a noise with words, but thou givest to understand them.

3. Let not, therefore, Moses speak unto me, but thou, my Lord God, the everlasting Truth; lest I die, and prove unfruitful, if I be warned outwardly only, and not inflamed within.

Let not the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed, turn to my condemnation.

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Speak, therefore, Lord ; for thy servant heareth ; for thou hast the words of eternal life.

Speak unto me to the comfort of my soul, and to the amendment of my whole life, and to thy praise, and glory, and everlasting honour.

CHAPTER III.

That the Words of God are to be heard with Humility, and that many weigh them not.

Christ.—SON, hear my words, words of the greatest sweetness, excelling all the knowledge of the philosophers and wise men of this world.

My words are spirit and life, not to be weighed by the understanding of men.

They are to be heard with silence, and to be received with all humility and great affection.

Christian.—Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law : that thou mayest give him rest from the evil days, and that he be not destroyed upon the earth.

2. *Christ.*—I have taught the prophets from the beginning, and cease not in these days to speak to every one ; but many are hardened and deaf to my speech.

Most men more willingly listen to the world than to God ; and follow sooner the desires of the flesh than the will of God.

The world promiseth temporal and small things, and is served with great eagerness : I promise high and eternal things, and the hearts of men are unmoved.

Who is he that serveth and obeyeth me, with such care as the world and the lords thereof, are served with.

Blush, therefore, slothful and complaining servant, that they are more eager for destruction, than thou for life.

They rejoice more in vanity, than thou in the truth.

And yet they are often frustrated of their hope ; but my promise deceiveth none, nor sendeth him away empty that trusteth in me.

What I have promised, I will give ; I will fulfil what I have said, to him that remains faithful in love to the end.

I am the rewarder of all that are good, and try my servants with strong trials.

3. Write my words in thy heart and think diligently of them ; for they will be very necessary in the time of temptation.

What thou understandest not when thou readest, thou shalt know in the day of visitation.

I am wont to visit my elect two ways : with temptation and with comfort.

And I daily read two lessons unto them : one reprehending their vices, another, exhorting them to the increase of virtues.

He that hath my words, and despiseth them, hath him that shall judge him at the last day.

4. *Christian.*—O Lord, my God, thou art to me whatsoever is good. Who am I, that I dare speak unto thee ? I am thy poorest servant, and a most vile worm, much poorer and more contemptible than I can express.

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Yet remember, O Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing.

Thou alone art good, just, and holy ; thou canst do all things ; thou fillest all things ; only the proud thou sendest empty away.

Remember thy mercies, and fill my heart with thy grace, thou who willest not that thy works should be empty.

5. How can I bear myself, unless thou strengthenest me with thy mercy and grace ? Turn not thy face from me ; delay not thy visitation ; take not away thy comfort, lest my soul become as the thirsty land.

Lord, teach me to fulfil thy will, teach me to live worthily and humbly in thy sight, for thou art my Wisdom ; thou dost truly know me, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

That we ought to live in Truth and Humility before God.

Christ.—SON, walk before me in truth, and ever seek me in simplicity of heart.

He that walketh before me in truth, shall be defended from evil ; and the truth shall deliver him from seducers, and from the detractions of the wicked. If the truth shall have made thee free, thou shalt be free indeed.

Christian.—Lord, it is true. According as thou

hast said, so I beseech thee let it be with me ; let thy truth teach me and keep me, and bring me safe to a happy end.

Let it deliver me from all evil affections and inordinate love ; and I shall walk with thee in great freedom of heart.

2. *Christ.*—I will teach thee those things that are right and pleasing in my sight.

Think of thy sins with great displeasure and grief, and never esteem thyself any thing for thy good works.

Thou art in very deed a sinner, thou art subject to, and incumbered with, many passions.

Of thyself, thou always tendest to nothing : thou art quickly cast down, quickly overcome, quickly troubled, quickly dissolved.

Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to despise thyself ; for thou art much weaker than thou art able to comprehend.

3. Make no account, therefore, of any thing that thou doest.

Let nothing seem great, nothing precious and wonderful ; let nothing seem worthy of estimation, nothing high, nothing truly praiseworthy and desirable, but that which is everlasting.

Let the eternal truth above all things please thee. Let thy own great unworthiness always displease thee.

Fear nothing, flee nothing, so much as thy vices and sins.

Some walk not sincerely in my sight ; but will

know my secrets, and understand the high things of God ; neglecting themselves and their own salvation.

These often, because I resist them, fall into great temptations and sins.

4. Fear the judgments of God : dread the wrath of the Almighty. But discuss not the works of the Highest. Search thine own iniquities, how much thou hast offended, and how much thou hast neglected. Some place their religion only in books, some in outward forms and ceremonies.

Some have me in their mouths, but little in their hearts.

There are others that, being illuminated in their understandings, and purged in their affections, continually pant after things eternal ; these perceive what the Spirit of Truth speaketh in them :

Because it teacheth them to despise earthly and love heavenly things ; to neglect the world, and all the day and night to desire heaven.

CHAPTER V.

Of the wonderful Effects of Divine Love

Christian.—I PRAISE thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poor creature.

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, thanks be unto thee, who with thy comfort refreshest me, that am unworthy of all comfort.

I ever bless and glorify thee, with thy only-begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever.

O Lord God, the holy lover of my soul, when thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoice.

Thou art my glory, and the joy of my heart. Thou art my hope and refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But, because I am still weak in love, I have need to be strengthened and comforted by thee. Visit me, therefore, often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline.

Deliver me from evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections, that being healed within, I may be made fit to love, strong to suffer, and constant to persevere.

3. *Christ*.—Love is a great thing, which alone maketh every burden light, and beareth all the vicissitudes of life.

For it carrieth a burden without a burden ; and maketh things that are bitter sweet and savoury. The love of Jesus impelleth to do great things, and stirreth up continually to desire greater perfection.

Love will be aloft, and not keep down with any earthly thing. Love will be free, and loose from all worldly affection, lest its inward sight be hindered, lest it be entangled by any temporal prosperity, or subdued by adversity.

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing is stronger, nothing higher, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or in earth :

Because love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all creatures.

4. He that loveth, flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth ; he is free, and not bound.

He giveth all for all, and hath all in all ; for he resteth in the Supreme One, from whom all good proceedeth.

He respecteth not the gifts, but turneth himself above all goods unto the Giver.

Love often knoweth no measure, but is inflamed above all measure.

Love feeleth no burden, weigheth no pains, desireth above its strength ; complaineth not of impossibility ; for it thinketh all things possible.

It is therefore able to undertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to pass ; whereas, he that doth not love, fainteth and sinketh under them.

5. Love watcheth, and, sleeping, sleepeth not : being tired, is not weary ; straitened, is not pressed ; but like a lively flame, it bursteth out aloft, and securely passeth through all. If a man love, he knoweth what this meaneth. The ardent affection of the soul crieth aloud in the ears of God, when it saith, " My God, my Love, thou art wholly mine, and I am wholly thine."

6. *Christian*.—Enlarge me in love, that with the inward mouth of my heart, I may taste how sweet it is to love, and to be melted and swim in thy love.

Let me be possessed by love, mounting above myself with exceeding fervour and admiration. Let me sing the song of love, let me follow thee on high, my Beloved : let my soul die away in thy praise, rejoicing through love.

Let me love thee more than myself, and not myself but for thee, and all in thee that truly love

thee, as the law of love commandeth, which shineth out from thee.

7. *Christ.*—Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, and delightful; strong, patient, faithful, prudent, long-suffering, manly, and never seeking itself.

For where one seeketh himself, there he falleth from love.

Love is circumspect, humble, and upright; not soft, nor light, nor attending unto vain things; but sober, chaste, constant, quiet, and guarded in all the senses.

Love is subject and obedient to superiors, vile and despicable to itself; devout and thankful unto God, trusting and hoping always in him.

8. He that is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand to the will of his Beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover ought to embrace willingly all that is hard and distasteful, for his Beloved.

CHAPTER VI.

Of a Proof of a true Lover.

Christ.—SON, thou art not yet a valiant and prudent lover.

Christian.—Wherefore, Lord?

Christ.—Because thou givest over thy undertaking for a small difficulty, and too greedily seekest after comfort.

A valiant lover standeth firmly in temptation, and giveth not credit to the crafty persuasions of the enemy.

As I please him in prosperity, I am not unpleas-
ant to him in adversity.

2. A prudent lover considereth not so much the
gift of his love, as the love of the giver. He re-
gardeth the love more than the value, and valueth
his beloved above all his gifts.

A generous lover resteth not in the gifts, but in
me above every gift.

3. Know that thy ancient enemy doth ever strive
to hinder thy desire to good, and to divert thee from
all religious exercises ; to wit, from all devout
memory of my passion, from the profitable remem-
brance of thy sins, from the guard of thine own
heart, and from the firm purpose of profiting in
virtue.

He injecteth many evil thoughts, that he may
cause a weariness in thee, to drive thee from prayer
and holy reading.

Humble prayer is displeasing unto him ; and if
he could, he would cause thee to cease from receiv-
ing the sacrament.

Trust him not, care not for him, although he
should often set snares for thee.

If he suggest evil thoughts unto thee, say unto
him, "Away, unclean spirit ; blush miserable
wretch ; thou art very unclean, that bringest such
things to mine ears.

"Away from me, wicked deceiver, thou shalt have
no part in me : but Jesus shall be with me as a
strong warrior, and thou shalt stand confounded.

"Hold thy peace, and be silent ; I will hear thee
no more, though thou shouldest work me many

troubles. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation • whom shall I fear? Though hosts of men rise up against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid. The Lord is my Helper and my Redeemer.

CHAPTER VII.

That Grace is to be guarded by Humility.

Christ.—THE way of man is not in his power; but it belongeth to God to comfort when he will, and how much he will, and whom he will; as shall please him, and no more.

They that are yet but novices, and unacquainted in the way of the Lord, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, may easily be deceived and overthrown.

2. And if they will rather follow their own judgment, than give credit to others that are experienced, the event will be dangerous.

Seldom those that are self-wise suffer themselves humbly to be governed by others.

Christian.—Shall I speak unto my Lord, who am dust and ashes!

If I esteem better of myself, behold, thou standest against me; and my iniquities bear true witness against me, neither can I contradict it.

But if I abase and know myself to be nothing, if I renounce all self-esteem, and (as I am) account myself to be but dust; thy grace will be favourable unto me, and thy light will be near my heart.

And all self-esteem shall be swallowed up in the deep valley of my nothingness, and perish everlastingly.

Then thou showest myself unto me, what I am, what I have been, and whither I am come : for I am nothing, and I knew it not.

And if I be left to myself, behold, I become all weakness. But if thou look upon me, I am made strong.

And it is a great marvel, that I am suddenly lifted up, and so graciously embraced by thee, who, by my own weight, always sink downward.

3. Thy love is the cause thereof, freely preventing me, and relieving me in so many necessities ; preserving me from many grievous dangers, and delivering me from innumerable evils.

For by inordinately loving myself, I lost myself ; and by seeking thee alone, and purely loving thee, I have found both myself and thee ; and by that love have more deeply brought myself to nothing.

For thou, O Lord, dealest with me above all desert, above all that I dare hope or ask.

4. Blessed be thou, my God ; for although I be unworthy of any benefits, yet thy bounty and thy infinite goodness never cease to do good even to the ungrateful and them that are far from thee.

Turn us unto thee, O Lord, that we may be thankful, humble, and holy ; for thou art our power, and our strength, and our salvation.

CHAPTER VIII.

All things are to be referred to God, as to their last End.

Christ.—SON, I ought to be thy last end, if thou desirest to be truly blessed.

By this intention thy affection will be purified, which is often inordinately bent down to itself, and unto creatures.

For, if in any thing thou seekest thyself, thou soonallest into spiritual dryness.

Refer, therefore, all things unto me ; for I am he that hath given all.

Consider every thing as flowing from the highest good : and, therefore, all things are to be reduced unto me, as unto their original.

2. Out of me, as out of a living fountain, the little and the great, the poor and the rich, draw the water of life ; and they that willingly and freely serve me, shall receive grace for grace.

But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any good that tends not to me, shall not be grounded in true joy, nor enlarged in his heart, but shall be many ways incumbered and straitened.

Thou oughtest, therefore, to ascribe nothing of good unto thyself, nor attribute goodness unto any man ; but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing.

I have bestowed all, and will that all be returned unto me again ; and, with great strictness, I require thanks.

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vain glory. And if true love enter in, there shall be no envy, nor straitness of heart, neither shall there be any place for self-love.

For divine love overcometh all, and enlargeth all the powers of the soul.

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joyce, in me alone thou wilt hope : for none is good but God alone, who is to be praised above all things, and to be blessed in all.

CHAPTER IX.

What a sweet thing it is to despise the World, and to serve God.

Christian.—Now I will speak again, O Lord, and will not be silent : I will say in the ears of my God, my Lord, and my King, that is on high :

O how great is the abundance of thy goodness, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for those that fear thee ?

But what art thou to them that love thee ? what to them that serve thee with their whole heart ?

Truly unspeakable is the sweetness of contemplating thee, which thou bestowest on them that love thee.

In this chiefly thou hast showed me the sweetness of thy love : that when I was not thou madest me ; and when I went astray, afar off from thee, thou broughtest me back again, that I might serve thee ; and hast commanded me to love thee.

2. O fountain of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee ? How can I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, even after I had pined away and perished ?

Thou hast showed mercy to thy servant, beyond all my expectation. Thou hast exhibited thy favour and friendship beyond all my desert.

What shall I return to thee for this favour ?

it much that I should serve thee, whom all creatures are bound to serve?

It ought not to seem much unto me to serve thee; but this rather seemeth much and marvellous unto me, that thou vouchsafedst to receive into thy service one so poor and unworthy, and to join him with thy beloved servants.

3. Behold, all is thine which I have, and whereby I serve thee. And yet, contrariwise, thou rather servest me than I thee.

Behold, heaven and earth, which thou hast created for the service of man, are all ready at hand, and do daily perform whatsoever thou dost command.

And this is little: Thou hast also appointed the angels to the service of man.

But that which excelleth all is this, that thou, thou thyself, hast vouchsafed to serve man, and promised to give thyself unto him.

4. What shall I give thee for all these thousands of benefits? Would I could serve thee all the days of my life! Would I were able, at least for one day, to do thee worthy service!

Verily, thou art worthy of all service, of all honour, and everlasting praise.

Verily, thou art my Lord, and I thy poor servant, that am bound to serve thee with all my might, neither ought I ever to be weary of praising thee.

This I wish to do, this I desire; and whatsoever is wanting unto me, vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to supply.

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CHAPTER X.

The Desires of our Hearts are to be Examined.

Christ.—SON, thou must learn many things which thou hast not yet well learned.

Christian.—What are these, Lord?

Christ.—That thou frame thy desires wholly according to my pleasure: and be not a lover of thyself, but a zealous follower of my will.

Thy desires often inflame thee, and that vehemently; but consider whether thou art moved rather for my honour or for thy own profit.

If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content, howsoever I shall ordain:

But if there lurk in thee any self-seeking, behold, this is it that hindereth thee, and weigheth thee down.

2. Beware, therefore, thou lean not too much upon any desire conceived without asking my counsel; lest afterward it repent thee, and thou dislikest what before pleased thee, and which thou zealously desiredst as the best.

For every affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed; nor every affection that at first seemed evil, to be avoided.

It is expedient to use restraint, even in good desires and endeavours, lest by importunity of desire, thou incurrest distraction of mind, and by thy want of self-government, be a scandal to others, or, being gainsayed by others, thou be suddenly troubled, and fall.

But thou oughtest to use violence, and resist manfully thy sensual appetites, and respect not what the flesh would or would not ; but rather to labour, that even perforce it be subject to the spirit.

Thou dust, learn to obey. Thou earth and clay, learn to humble thyself, to bow down beneath the feet of all men. Learn to break thine own will, and to yield thyself to all subjection.

3. Be zealous against thyself, and suffer not pride to live in thee.

Show thyself so lowly, such a little child, that every one may go over thee, and tread thee as the dirt of the streets under their feet.

Vain man what hast thou to complain of ? Vain sinner, what canst thou answer to them that reproach thee, who hast so often offended God, and so many times deserved hell ? But mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in my sight.

That thou mightest know my love, and always remain thankful for my benefits.

And that thou mightest continually study true subjection and humility, and patiently endure to be despised.

CHAPTER XI.

We must consider the sacred Judgments of God, lest we be exalted on account of our good deeds.

Christian.—THOU thunderest forth thy judgments over me, O Lord ; thou shakest all my bones with fear and trembling, and my soul is sore afraid.

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I stand astonished when I consider that the heavens are not pure in thy sight.

If thou hast found wickedness in angels, and hast not pardoned them, what shall become of me? Stars fell from heaven: and am I, who am dust, proud.

2. There is, therefore, no sanctity, if thou, O Lord, withdraw thine hand.

No wisdom availeth, if thou cease to govern. No strength helpeth, if thou leave off to defend. No chastity is secure, if thou do not protect it. No vigilance profits, if thy sacred watchfulness be not present.

For if we be left, we sink and perish; but if thou visit us, we are raised up and live.

We are inconstant, but by thee we are established: we grow cold, but by thee we are inflamed.

3. O how meanly and humbly ought I to think of myself! How nothing ought I to esteem it, if I seem to have any good!

O Lord, with what profound humility I ought to submit myself to thy inscrutable judgments, where I find myself to be a nothing, a very nothing! O unmeasurable height! O impassable sea, where I find myself to be nothing, how altogether nothing! Where then is the hiding place of glory? Where is the confidence I once conceived of my own virtue?

All vain glorying is swallowed up in the depths of thy judgments over me.

4. What is all flesh in thy sight?

Shall the clay glory against him that framed it?

How can he be lifted up with vain words, whose heart is truly subject to God?

All the world cannot lift him up, whom the truth hath subjected unto itself; neither shall he be moved with the tongues of all his praisers, that hath settled his whole hope upon God.

For as for them that speak, behold, they are all nothing; they shall pass away as doth the sound of their words: but the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.

CHAPTER XII.

How we are to be affected, and what we are to say, in every thing which we desire.

Christ.—SON, say thus in every thing, “Lord, if it be pleasing to thee, let this be thus.

1. “Lord, if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy name.

2. “Lord if thou seest it expedient for me, and knowest it to be profitable, then grant me to use this unto thy honour.

3. “But if thou knowest it will be hurtful unto me, and not profitable to the health of my soul, take away this desire from me.”

For every desire proceedeth not from the Holy Ghost, though it seemeth unto man right and good.

It is hard to judge rightly, whether a good spirit, or the contrary incline thee to desire this or that, or whether thou art moved by thine own spirit.

Many are deceived in the end, who at first seem to be led by a good spirit.

4. Always, therefore, whatsoever seemeth desirable to thee, let it be desired and prayed for in the

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fear of God, with humility of heart. And, above all, thou oughtest to resign thyself, and to commit the whole unto me, and say,

“Lord, thou knowest what is best ; let this or that be done as thou pleasest.

“ Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt.

“ Deal with me as thou thinkest good, and as best pleaseth thee, and as is most for thy honour.

“ Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things according to thy will.

“ I am in thy hands ; turn me, and turn me again, which way soever thou pleasest.

“ Behold, I am thy servant, prepared for all things: for I desire not to live unto myself, but unto thee: and, O that I could do it worthily and perfectly!”

3. “ Grant me thy grace, O most gracious Jesus, that it may be with me, and continue with me unto the end.

“ Grant me always to desire and will that which is most acceptable unto thee, and best pleaseth thee. Let thy will be mine, and let my will ever follow thine, and agree perfectly with it.

“ Let my will and nill be all one with thine; and let me not be able to will or nill any thing else, but what thou willest or nillest.”

4. “ Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, and for thy sake love to be contemned and not to be known in this world.

“ Grant that above all things which can be desired, I may rest in thee, may quiet my heart in thee.

“Thou art the true peace of the heart, thou art the only rest; out of thee all things are troublesome and unquiet.

“In this very peace that is in thee, the one chief, eternal Good, may I sleep and rest. Amen.”

CHAPTER XIII.

True comfort is to be sought in God alone.

My soul, thou canst not be fully comforted, nor have perfect delight, but in God, the comforter of the poor, and the helper of the humble.

Wait awhile, O my soul, wait the divine promises; and thou shalt have abundance of all good things. Use temporal things; desire eternal.

Thou canst not be satisfied with any temporal goods, because thou art not created to enjoy them.

Although thou hadst all created good, yet wouldest thou not be happy: but in God who hath created all things, thy whole happiness consisteth.

Vain and short is all human comfort.

Blessed and real is that comfort which is received inwardly from the truth.

A devout man every where carrieth with him Jesus his Comforter, and saith unto him, “Be present with me Lord Jesus, in every place and time.”

Let this be my comfort, to be willing to want all human comfort.

And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will be unto me as the greatest comfort: for thou wilt not be angry always, neither wilt thou threaten for ever.

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CHAPTER XIV.

That all our Care is to be cast on God.

Christ.—SON, suffer me to do with thee what I please: I know what is expedient for thee.

Thou thinkest like a man, thou judgest in many things as human affection persuadeth thee.

Christian.—Lord what thou sayest is true. Thy care for me is greater than all the care that I can take for myself.

For he standeth totteringly, that casteth not his whole care upon thee.

Lord, so that my will may remain right and firm towards thee, do with me whatsoever shall please thee.

For it cannot but be good, whatsoever thou doest with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in darkness, be thou blessed; and if it be thy will I should be in light, be thou again blessed.

If thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be thou blessed; and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou equally blessed.

Christ.—SON, such must be thy disposition, if thou wilt walk with me. Thou must be as ready to suffer as to rejoice. Thou oughtest to be as willing to be poor and needy, as full and rich.

3. *Christian.*—Lord, I willingly suffer for thee, whatsoever thy pleasure is shall befall me.

I will receive indifferently from thy hand, good and evil, sweet and bitter, delightful and sorrowful, and give thee thanks for all that befall me.

Keep me from all sin, and I will neither fear death nor hell.

So thou dost not for ever cast me from thee, nor blot me out of the Book of Life, what tribulation soever befalleth me, shall not hurt me.

CHAPTER XV.

Of suffering Injuries; and who is proved to be truly patient.

Christ.—WHAT is it thou sayest, son? Cease to complain, considering my passion, and that of my other saints.

Thou hast not yet resisted unto blood.

Do not say, "I cannot suffer these things at the hand of such a person, nor ought I to suffer such things; for he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with those things which I never thought of; but of another I will willingly suffer, as proper occasions of suffering shall offer."

Such a thought is foolish: it considereth not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned; but rather weigheth the persons and the injuries offered.

2. He is not truly patient, that will not suffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he listeth.

But the truly patient man mindeth not by whom he is exercised, whether by his superior, or some of his equals, or by his inferior; whether by a good and holy man, or by a perverse and unworthy person.

But indifferently from all creatures how much

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soever, or how often soever, any adversity befalleth him, he taketh all thankfully from the hands of God, and esteemeth it great gain :

Seeing nothing, how little soever, so it be suffered for God, shall pass without its reward from Him.

3. Be thou therefore prepared for the fight if thou wilt have the victory.

Without a combat, thou canst not attain unto the crown of patience.

If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned. But if thou desire to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently.

Without labour there is no coming to rest, nor without fighting can victory be obtained.

4. *Christian.*—Lord, let that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature.

Thou knowest, that I can suffer but little, and that I am quickly dismayed when a small adversity ariseth.

Let every exercise of tribulation be made acceptable unto me, and be welcome for thy name ; for to suffer and to be troubled for thy sake are very profitable for my soul.

I will confess against me my unrighteousness ; I will confess unto thee, O Lord, my infirmities.

It is often a small matter that dejecteth and grieveth me. I purpose to act with courage ; but when a small temptation cometh, it bringeth me into great straits.

It is sometimes a very trifle from whence great temptations. And whilst I think myself somewhat

safe, when I least expect it, I find myself sometimes overcome with a small blast.

5. Behold, therefore, Lord, my low estate, and my frailty, every way known unto thee.

Have mercy on me, and deliver me out of the mire, that I stick not fast therein, and that I may not be cast down altogether.

6. O mighty God of Israel, the zealous lover of faithful souls, let it please thee to consider the labour and sorrow of thy servant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh.

Strengthen me with heavenly strength, lest the old man, the miserable flesh, not yet fully subject to the spirit, prevail.

CHAPTER XVI.

We are to rest in God above all his gifts and Benefits.

Christian.—ABOVE all things and in all things, O my soul, thou shalt ever rest in the Lord : for he is the everlasting rest of the saints.

Grant me, O most loving Jesus, to rest in thee above all creatures :

Above all health and beauty, above all glory and honour, above all power and dignity, above all knowledge and subtilty, above all riches and arts, above all joy and gladness, above all hope and promise, above all desert and desire :

Above all gifts and presents that thou canst impart unto us ; above all joy and triumph, that the mind of man can receive and feel :

Lastly, above angels and archangels, and above all the hosts of heaven, above all visible and invisible things, and above all that thou art not, O my God.

2. For thou, my Lord God, art best above all ; thou alone art most high ; thou alone most powerful ; thou alone most full and sufficient ; thou alone most sweet and overflowing with comfort ; thou alone most lovely and loving ; thou alone most noble and glorious above all things, in whom all good things are together, and most perfectly, and ever have been and shall be :

And therefore it is too little, whatsoever thou bestowest on me besides thyself, or revealest unto me of thyself, or promisest, whilst thou art not seen and fully obtained :

For surely my heart cannot truly rest, unless it rest in thee, and surmount all gifts and creatures whatsoever.

3. O my beloved Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, the most pure Lover, the Governor of all creatures ! O that I had the wings of true liberty, that I might fly away, and be at rest in thee !

O when shall it be granted me, in quietness of mind, to see how sweet thou art, my Lord God !

When shall I fully gather up myself into thee, that by reason of my love to thee, I may not feel myself, but thee alone, above all sense or measure, in a manner not known unto every one ?

4. O Jesus, the brightness of the eternal glory, thou comfort of the banished soul, with thee is my tongue without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee.

How long doth my Lord delay to come? Let him come unto me, his poor servant, and make me glad. Let him put forth his hand, and deliver me from all trouble.

Come, O come ; for without thee I shall have no joyful hour ; for thou art my joy, and without thee my table is empty.

A wretched creature I am until thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence, and settest me at liberty.

5. Let others seek what they please instead of thee ; but for me, nothing else doth, or shall delight me, but thou only, my God, my hope, my everlasting salvation.

I will not hold my peace, nor cease to pray, until thy grace return, and thou speak inwardly unto me.

Christ.—Behold, I am here ; behold, I come unto thee, because thou hast called upon me. Thy tears and the distress of thy soul, thy humiliation, and the contrition of thy heart, have inclined and brought me unto thee.

Christian.—Lord, I have called thee, and have desired to enjoy thee, being ready to cast away all things for thee. For thou first hast stirred me up that I might seek thee.

Blessed be thou, therefore, O Lord, that hast showed thy goodness to thy servant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but greatly to humble himself in thy sight, and be always mindful of his own iniquity and vileness.

For there is none like unto thee in all that is wonderful in heaven and earth.

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Thy works are very good, thy judgments true, and by thy providence all things are governed.

Praise, therefore, and glory be unto thee, O Wisdom of the Father! Let my mouth, my soul, and all creatures together, praise and bless thee.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Remembrance of the many Benefits of God.

Christian.— OPEN, O Lord, my heart in thy law, and teach me to walk in thy commandments.

Grant me to understand thy will and remember thy benefits that henceforward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks. But I know and confess, that I am not able to give thee due thanks for the least of thy favours.

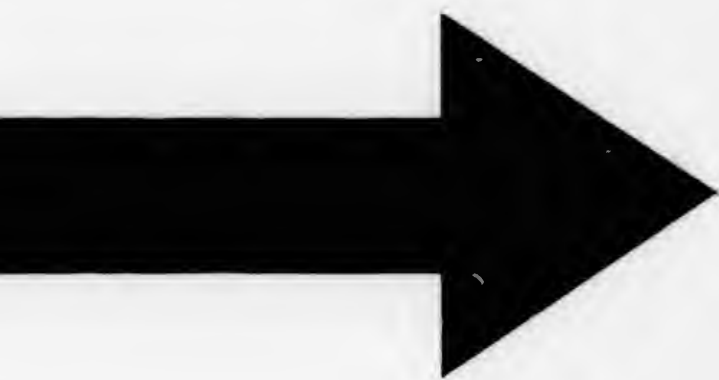
I am less than the least of all thy benefits: and when I consider thy bounty, the greatness thereof maketh my spirit to faint.

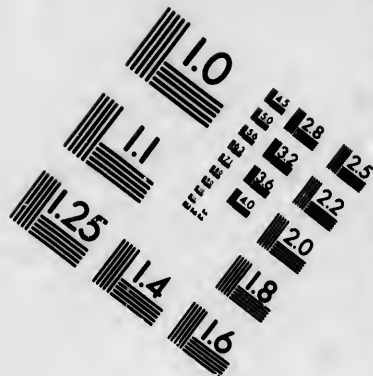
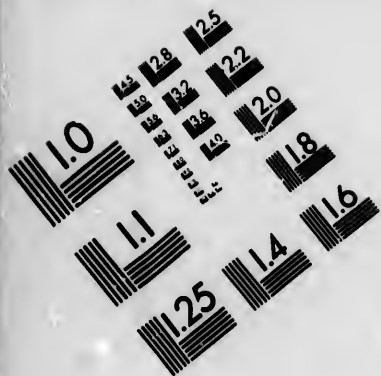
2. All that we have in our souls and bodies, and whatsoever we possess outwardly or inwardly, naturally or supernaturally, are thy benefits and speak thee bountiful, merciful, and good, from whom we have received all good things.

Although one has received more, another less; all notwithstanding are thine, and without thee even the least cannot be had.

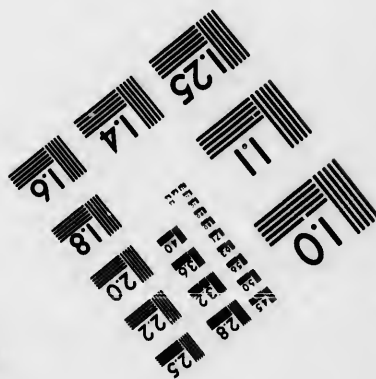
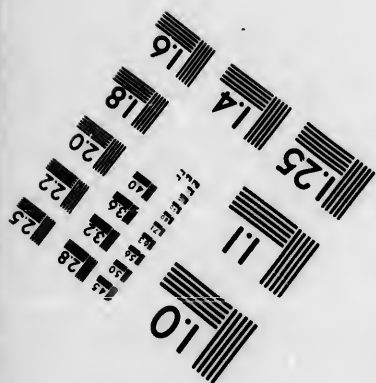
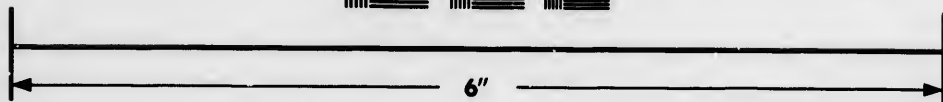
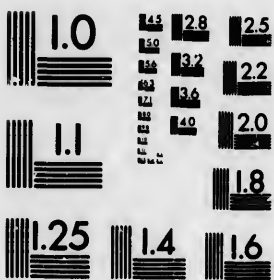
He that hath received greater, cannot extol himself above others: for he is greater and better, that ascribeth least unto himself, and is more humble and devout in rendering thanks.







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And he that esteemeth himself vilest of all men, is fitter to receive greater blessings.

3. And he that hath received fewer, ought not to repine nor envy them that have greater store ; but attend rather unto thee, and highly praise thy goodness, who bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely and so willingly, without respect of persons.

All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised.

Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every man, and why one man hath less and another more. It is not ours, but thine to judge, who dost exactly know what is meet for every one.

4 Nothing, therefore, ought so to rejoice him that loveth thee, and acknowledgeth thy benefits, as thy will in him, and the good pleasure of thy eternal appointment.

With this he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would be as willing to be the least, as another is to be greatest.

He is as peaceable and contented in the last as in the first place.

He is as willing to be despised and contemned, and to be of no esteem or account, as to be preferred in honour above all others, and to be greater in the world.

For thy will, and the love of thy glory, ought to be preferred above all things ;

And to comfort him more, and please him better, than all the benefits which either he hath received or may receive.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Of Four Things that bring much Peace.

Christ.—SON, now I will teach thee the way of peace and true liberty. Endeavour to do rather the will of another than thine own. Ever choose rather to have less than none.

Always seek the lowest place and to be beneath every one. Continually wish and pray that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee.

Behold such a man entereth into the bonds of peace and quietness.

2. *Christ.*—Lord, this thy short speech containeth much perfection.

Thou who canst do all things, and ever lovest the profiting of my soul, increase in me thy grace, that I may fulfil thy works and work out my own salvation.

My Lord God, be not far from me ; my God, consider and help me ; for sundry thoughts have risen up against me, afflicting my soul.

How shall I pass through them without hurt ?
How shall I utterly break them ?

Christ.—I will go before thee, and will humble the great ones of the earth. I will open the doors of the prison, and reveal unto thee hidden secrets.

Christian.—Do, Lord, as thou sayest ; and let all evil thoughts flee before thy face. This is my hope, my only comfort, to flee unto thee in every tribulation ; to trust in thee to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

3. Enlighten me, O good Jesus, with a clear, shining, inward light, and drive away all darkness from the habitation of my heart.

Repress my wandering thoughts, and drive away those temptations which violently assault me.

Fight strongly for me, and vanquish those evil beasts, these enticing lusts ; that so peace may be obtained by thy power, and abundance of thy praise found in the holy court of a pure conscience.

Command the winds and the tempests: say unto the sea, " Be still ;" and to the north wind, " Blow, not ;" and there shall be a great calm.

Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may shine upon the earth: for I am as the earth, without form and void, until thou enlighten me.

Pour out thy grace from above, let thy heavenly dew distil upon my heart.

Supply streams of devotion to water the face of the earth, that it may bring forth good and excellent fruit.

Lift up my mind, which is pressed down by the weight of my sins. Draw up my whole desire to heavenly things, that having tasted the sweetness of supernatural happiness, it may be irksome to me even to think of earthly vanities.

4. Snatch me, and deliver me from all the unlasting comfort of creatures ; for no created thing can fully comfort and quiet my desire.

Join me unto thee with an inseparable band of love ; for thou alone dost satisfy him that loveth thee, and without thee all things are frivolous.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of avoiding curious Inquiry into the Life of others.

Christ.---SON, be not curious ; trouble not thyself with idle cares.

What is this or that to thee ? Follow thou me. For what is it to thee whether this man be such or not ? whether this man do or speak this or that ?

Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give account of thyself.

Behold I know every one, and see all things that are under the sun, and understand how it is with every one, what he thinks, what he desires, and at what his intention aims.

All things, therefore, ought to be committed unto me ; but do thou keep thyself in peace, and let him that acts, act as he will.

Whatsoever he shall have done or said, shall fall upon himself ; for he cannot deceive me.

2. Be not careful for the shadow of a great name, or for the friendship of many ; nor for the affection of particular men. For these things distract and greatly darken the heart.

I would willingly utter my words, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou didst diligently observe my coming, and open the door of thy heart unto me.

Be careful, and watch in prayer, and humble thyself in all things.

CHAPTER XX.

Wherein firm Peace of Heart, and true profiting consist.

Christ.—SON, I have said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”

All desire peace, but all care not for those things that appertain to peace.

My peace is with the humble and meek of heart. Thy peace doth consist in much patience. If thou wilt hear me and follow my voice, thou mayest enjoy much peace.

Christian.—What, then, shall I do, Lord ?

Christ.—In every thing attend unto thyself, what thou doest, and what thou sayest, and direct thy whole attention unto this, that thou mayest please me alone, and desire nothing beside me.

Of the sayings and doings of others, judge not rashly, neither do thou entangle thyself with things not committed unto thee: and doing thus thou shalt be little or seldom troubled.

Yet do not esteem highly of thyself, or account thyself to be especially beloved, if thou be in great devotion and sweetness: for the profiting and perfection of a man consist not in these things.

2 Christian.—Wherein then, Lord ?

Christ.—In offering thyself with thy whole heart unto the will of God.

So that thou keepest one and the same even countenance with thanksgiving, both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all in an equal balance.

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If thou preparest thy heart to suffer, and dost not justify thyself, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these so great afflictions, but justifiest me in whatsoever I appoint, and praisest my holy name ; then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace.

And if thou attain to the full contempt of thyself, then shalt thou enjoy abundance of peace.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the excellent Liberty which humble Prayer sooner gaineth than Reading.

Christian.—LORD, it is the work of a perfect man never to slacken his mind from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and to pass without care among many cares : not like a dull sluggard ; but by a free mind adhering to no creature with inordinate affection.

2. I beseech thee, my most gracious God, preserve me from the cares of this life, lest I be entangled thereby ; and from the many necessities of the body, lest I should be caught by pleasure ; and from whatsoever is an obstacle to the soul, lest, broken with troubles, I should be overthrown.

3. O my God, who art ineffable sweetness, embitter unto me all comfort, which draws me away from the love of eternal things by the hope of present delight.

Let me not be overcome, O Lord, let me not be overcome by flesh and blood. Let not the world and the short glory thereof deceive me.

Let not the devil and his subtilty supplant me.
Give me strength to resist, patience to suffer, and
constancy to persevere.

Give me, instead of the comforts of the world, the
unction of thy Spirit ; and for carnal love, pour into
my soul the love of thy name.

Herein, I beseech thee, let thy hand govern me,
and teach me, that I may fall into no extreme.

CHAPTER XXII.

*That Self-Love hindereth our attainment of the
Supreme Love.*

Christ.—SON, thou oughtest to give all for all, and
to retain nothing of thyself. Know that the love
of thy own will, doth hurt thee more than any thing
in the world.

According to the love and affection thou bearest
to it, every thing cleaves unto thee more or less.
If thy love be pure, thou shalt not be in bondage to
any thing.

Covet not that which thou mayest not have. Be
not willing to have that which may deprive thee of
inward liberty.

It is strange that thou committest not thyself
wholly unto me, from the bottom of the heart, with
all things that thou canst desire and have.

2. Why dost thou consume thyself with vain grief?
Why art thou tired with needless cares? Stand to
my will, and thou shalt suffer no detriment.

If thou seek this or that, and would be here or
there, to enjoy thy own will or pleasure ; thou shalt
never be quiet, nor free from care :

For in every thing somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee.

3. It availeth thee not to multiply outward things, but to despise them, and utterly root them out of thy heart.

Unless thou stand steadfast in me, thou mayest change, but, not better thyself.

For when occasion of change happens, and is embraced thou shalt find not only those things which thou soughtest to flee, but a great deal more.

4. *Christian*.—Strengthen me, O God, by the grace of thy Holy Spirit.

Give me to be strengthened in my inward man, and to empty my heart of all uncomfortable care :

Not to be drawn away with the desire of any thing either mean or precious ; but to look upon all things as passing away, and myself as passing away together with them.

5. Grant me, O Lord, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things to seek and find thee : above all things to relish thee and love thee ;

And to think of all other things as they are, according to the disposal of thy wisdom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

How we ought to call upon God, and bless him in Tribulation.

Christian.—BLESSED, O Lord, be thy name for ever, who art pleased that this temptation and tribulation should come upon me.

I cannot flee it ; but must needs flee to thee, that thou mayest help me, and turn it to my good.

Lord, I am now afflicted, I am much troubled with this present suffering.

And now, dear Father, what shall I say? I am in a strait: save me from this hour!

Yet, therefore, came I unto this hour, that thou mayest be glorified, when I shall have been brought very low, and then delivered by thee.

Let it please thee, Lord, to deliver me; for, poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go, without thee?

Grant me patience, Lord, even at this time also. Help me, my God; and then I will not fear, how grievously soever I be afflicted.

2. And now in this my trouble, what shall I say? Lord, thy will be done: I have deserved to be afflicted.

Surely I ought to bear it; and, O that I could bear it with patience, until the tempest be passed over, and it become calm!

But thy hand is able to take away this temptation from me, and to assuage the violence thereof, that I utterly sink not under it, as often heretofore thou hast done unto me, O my God, my merciful God!

And how much the more hard is it to me, so much the more easy is this change to the right hand of the Most High.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of craving the Divine Aid, and confidence of recovering Grace.

Christ.—SON, I am the Lord that giveth strength

in the day of tribulation. Come unto me, when it is not well with thee.

This is that which, most of all, hindereth heavenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thyself unto prayer.

For before thou dost earnestly pray unto me, thou seekest, in the meanwhile, many comforts, and triest to refresh thyself with outward things.

And hence it comes to pass that all doth little profit thee, until thou considerest, that I am he who delivers those that trust in me; that out of me there is neither powerful help, nor profitable counsel, nor lasting remedy.

But now, having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength again in the light of my mercies; for I am at hand to repair all, not only entirely, but also abundantly.

2 Is there any thing hard to me?

Or am I like him that promiseth and performeth not.

Where is thy faith? be firm and constant. Take courage, and be patient; comfort will come to thee in due time.

Wait, wait for me: I will come and heal thee. Let not thy heart be troubled, neither let it fear. Believe in me, and put thy trust in my mercy.

When thou thinkest thyself farthest off from me, often times I am nearest unto thee. When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then often is the greatest opportunity of improvement.

That which I have given, I can take away, and restore it when I please.

3. When I give it, it is mine ; when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine ; for mine is every good and perfect gift.

If I send any cross, repine not, nor let thy heart fail. I can quickly succour thee, and turn all thy heaviness into joy.

Nevertheless, I am righteous and greatly to be praised, when I deal thus with thee.

As my Father hath loved me, I also love you, said I unto my beloved disciples : whom I sent, not to temporal joys, but to great conflicts ; not to honours, but to contempts ; not to idleness, but to labours ; not to rest, but to bring forth much fruit with patience.

My son, remember these words.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of the Contempt of all Creatures, in order to find out the Creator.

Christian.—LORD, I stand in need of yet greater grace, if I am to attain to that state wherein no man nor any creature may be a hinderance unto me.

For as long as any thing detains me, I cannot freely take my flight unto thee.

What is more quiet than a single eye ? and what more free than he that desireth nothing upon earth ?

And unless a man be free from the affections of all creatures, he cannot freely attend unto divine things.

Long shall he be little, and lie groveling below, that esteemeth any thing great, but the one infinite,

eternal Good. For whatsoever is not God, is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing.

Christ.—Son, thou canst not possess perfect liberty, unless thou wholly renounce thyself.

All who are lovers of themselves are fettered in bondage, full of desires, curious wanderers, seeking self-indulgence, and not the things of Jesus Christ; but often devising and framing that which shall not stand.

For all that is not of God shall perish.

Keep this short and perfect saying, Forsake all, and thou shalt find all: Leave desire, and thou shalt find rest.

Consider this well, and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all things.

Christian.—Lord, that is not one day's work; yea, in this short word is contained all perfection.

Christ.—Son, thou must not go back, nor straightways be dejected, when thou hearest the ways of the perfect; but rather be stirred up to higher things, and at least desire and sigh after them.

I would thou wert come to this, that thou wert no longer a lover of thyself, but that thou stoodest merely at my beck.

Then thou wouldest please me, and all thy life would pass away in joy and peace.

Thou hast yet many things to forsake; which unless thou wholly resign up unto me, thou shalt not attain that which thou desirest.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest become rich; that heavenly wisdom, which treadeth underfoot all earthly things.

Cast away earthly wisdom, and always study to please others, not thyself.

He that is wise, and well instructed, standeth fast, not heeding what he feels in himself, but that the whole attention of his mind may tend to the right end.

For this he may continue one and the selfsame, and unshaken in the midst of many various events, directing continually the single eye of his intention unto me.

3 And the purer the eye of the intention is, the more steadily doth he pass through various storms.

But in many things the eye of a pure intention waxeth dim ; for it quickly looketh upon any delightsome object that occurs.

And it is rare to find one that is wholly free from all blemish of self-seeking.

So the Jews of old came to Bethany to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus alone, but to see Lazarus also.

The eye of the intention, therefore, is to be purged, that it may be single and right, directed unto me, beyond the manifold earthly objects that come between.

CHAPTER XXVI.

That God is sweet above all things, and in all things to him that loveth.

Christian.—My God, and my all ; what would I have more, and what greater happiness can I desire ? O sweet and pleasing word ! But to him that loveth

the word ; not the world, nor those things that are in the world.

My God, and my All! enough is said to him that understandeth ; and to him that loveth, it is pleasant to repeat it often.

For when thou art present, all things please : But when thou art absent all things disgust. Thou givest quiet of heart, and much peace, and pleasant joy.

Thou makest us think well of all things, and praise thee in all things ; neither can any thing please long without thee.

But that any thing may be pleasant, thy grace must be pleasant, and it must be seasoned with the sweetness of thy wisdom.

2. What is not tasteful unto him who tasteth thee? And him who delighteth not in thee, what can delight.

3. O thou everlasting Light, surpassing all created lights, dart the beams of thy greatness from above, piercing the most inward parts of my heart!

Purify, rejoice, and enliven my spirit, with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with abundance of joy and triumph.

O when will that blessed hour come, when I shall be filled with thy presence, and thou be unto me all in all?

As long as this is not granted me, I shall not have full joy. Alas! the kingdom of my soul is not yet in peace.

4. But thou that rulest the raging of the sea, and stillest the waves thereof when they rise, arise and help me.

Scatter the people that delight in war: destroy them in thy might.

Display thy greatness, and let thy right hand be glorified; for there is no other hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of a pure and entire Resignation of ourselves for the obtaining Freedom of Heart.

Christ.—SON, forsake thyself, and thou shalt find me.

Stand without choosing any thing, and without seeking to have any thing as thine own. Resign thyself, without resuming thy claim.

Christian.—Lord, how often shall I resign myself? And wherein shall I forsake myself?

Christ.—Always, and every hour, as well in little things as in great: I except nothing, but require that thou be naked and void of all things.

Otherwise how canst thou be mine, and I thine, unless both within and without thou art free from all self-will?

2. Some resign themselves, but with some exception; for they put not their whole trust in God, and therefore they study how to provide for themselves.

Some also at first offer all; but afterwards being assaulted with temptation, return again to that which they had left, and therefore they go not forward in virtue.

These shall not attain to the true liberty of purity

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of heart, nor to the favour of my sweetest familiarity, unless they first make an entire resignation, and a daily oblation of themselves unto me.

3. I have often said unto thee, and now again I say the same, Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much inward peace.

Give all for all : seek nothing, require back nothing : abide purely and with a firm confidence in me, and then thou shalt enjoy me.

Thou shalt be free in heart, and darkness shall not have any power over thee.

Let this be thy prayer, let this be thy desire, that being stripped of all selfishness, thou mayest follow naked the naked Jesus, and, dying to thyself, mayest live eternally with me.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of the good Government of ourselves in outward things, and of recourse to God in Danger.

Christ.—SON, thou oughtest with all diligence to endeavour, that in every place and action of business, thou be inwardly free, and master of thyself, and that things be under thee, and not thou under them.

That thou mayest be lord of thy actions, not a servant or a hireling ; but rather a freeman and a true Hebrew, enjoying the liberty of the sons of God :

Who stand above the things that are present, and view the things which are eternal : who look on transitory things with the left eye, and with the right behold the things of heaven :

Whom temporal things cannot draw to cleave unto them ; but they rather draw temporal things to serve them, in such a way as they are ordained by God, and appointed by the creator of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remain steadfast in all events, and do not weigh by the outward appearance, nor with a carnal eye, the things which thou seest and hearest ; but presently in every affair dost enter with Moses into the tabernacle, to ask counsel of the Lord ; thou shalt hear the divine Oracle, and return instructed concerning many things both present and to come.

Away fly to the closet of thy heart, earnestly craving the divine favour.

For the Scripture testifieth, that therefore were Joshua and the children of Israel deceived by the Gibeonites, because they asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord.

Son, always commit thy cause to me, I will dispose well of it in due time.

Wait for my ordering of it, and thou shalt find it will be for thy good.

Christian.—Lord, I most willingly commit all unto thee ; for my care can avail little. O that I cleaved not too much to future events, but offered myself with all readiness of mind to thy good pleasure.

3. *Christ.*—Son, a man often earnestly labours for what he desireth ; and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind.

For men's affections do not long continue fixed on one thing.

It is, therefore, no small thing for a man to forsake himself, even in the smallest things.

4. The true profiting of a man consisteth in the denying of himself.

But the old enemy ceaseth at no time from tempting, but day and night layeth grievous snares, if haply he may cast the unwary into them.

Therefore, watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

That Man hath no good of himself, nor any thing whereof he can glory.

Christian.—"LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him ; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" What hath man deserved, that thou shouldst give him thy grace.

Lord, what cause have I to complain, if thou doest not that which I desire ?

Surely, Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have nothing, that is good of myself ; but in all things I am defective, and do ever tend to nothing.

And unless thou help, and inwardly instruct me, I become altogether cold and dissipated.

2. But thou, O Lord, art always the same, and endurest for ever ; always good, just and holy ; doing all things well, justly, and holily, and disposing all things with wisdom.

But I that am more ready to go backward than forward, do not ever continue in one estate, for seven times are passed over me.

Yet it is soon better with me, when it so pleaseth thee, and when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand.

For thou alone canst help me without the aid of man, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my heart shall be turned to thee alone, and there shall rest.

3. Thanks be unto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me.

But I am mere vanity and nothing in thy sight, an inconstant and weak man.

Wherefore, then can I glory? or, for what do I desire to be esteemed?

For nothing? But this is most vain.

The true glory, and holy rejoicing, are for a man to glory in thee, and not in himself: to rejoice in thy name, and not in his own virtue; not to delight in any creature, but in thee.

Praised be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy work, not mine.

Let thy holy name be blessed; but to me let no part of men's praise be given.

Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart. In thee will I glory and rejoice all the day long; but, as for myself, I will not glory, but in my infirmities.

4. Let the Jews seek honour one of another: I will desire that which is from God only.

For all human glory, all temporal honour, all worldly highness, is vanity and folly.

O my Truth, my Mercy, my God, most blessed Trinity, to Thee alone be praise, honour, power, and glory, for evermore!

CHAPTER XXX.

That our Peace is not to be placed in Men.

Christ.—SON, if thou place thy peace in any one, because he thinketh like thee, and liveth with thee, thou shalt be unstable and entangled.

But if thou have recourse unto the ever-living and eternal Truth, a friend going from thee, or dying, shall not grieve thee.

The love of thy friend ought to be grounded in me ; and for me is he to be loved, whomsoever he be, whom thou thinkest well of, and who is dear to thee in this life.

No friendship can avail or continue without me ; neither is that love true and pure, which is not knit by me.

Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections towards men, that thou shouldest wish to be without all friendship purely human.

2. But he that attributeth any good unto himself, hindereth God's grace coming unto him.

For the grace of the Holy Spirit ever seeketh a humble heart.

When thou castest thine eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creator is taken from thee.

Learn to overcome thyself in all things for the love of thy Creator ; and then thou shalt be able to attain to divine knowledge.

How little soever the thing be, if it be loved and regarded inordinately, it defileth the soul, and hindereth the enjoyment of the Supreme Good.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Against vain Knowledge.

Christ.—So N, let not the fair speeches and subtle sayings of men move thee : for the kingdom of God consisteth not in word but in power.

Labour to mortify thy sins ; for that will profit thee more than the knowledge of many difficult questions.

2. When thou hast read and knowest many things, thou must ever return to one principle.

I am he that teacheth man knowledge, and giveth unto babes a more clear understanding, than can be taught by man.

He to whom I speak shall quickly be wise, and he shall profit much in the spirit.

Woe be to them that inquire many curious things of men, and little mind the way how to serve me !

The time will come, when the Master of masters shall appear, Christ the Lord of angels, to hear the lesson of all, that is, to examine the conscience of every one.

And then he will search Jerusalem with a candle ; and the hidden things of darkness shall be laid open, and the arguing of men's tongues shall be silent.

3. I am he that teacheth without the noise of words, without the confusion of opinions.

I am he that teacheth to despise earthly things, to disclaim things present, to seek the everlasting, to relish things eternal, to flee honours, to suffer injuries, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing

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I am within, the Teacher of truth, the Searcher of the heart, the Discerner of the thoughts, the Promoter of good actions, distributing to every one as I judge meet.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of putting our Trust in God, when we are evil spoken of.

Christ.—SON, stand firm, and put thy trust in me : for what are words but words ? They fly through the air, but hurt not a stone.

If thou be guilty, see that thou be willing to amend thyself ; if thou be innocent, suffer this willingly for the sake of God.

It is but a small matter to suffer sometimes a few words, if thou hast not yet the courage to endure hard stripes.

Give diligent ear to my words, and thou shalt little regard ten thousand words spoken by men.

2. *Christian.*—O Lord God, thou just Judge, strong and patient, thou who knowest the frailty and wickedness of man, be thou my strength and my whole trust ; for my own conscience sufficeth me not.

Thou knowest that which I know not ; and therefore, in every reproof, I ought to have humbled myself, and to have borne meekly.

Vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein, and give me grace to bear it better hereafter.

For thy abundant mercy is more available to me

for the obtaining of pardon, than my fancied justice for my defence, since I cannot see to the bottom of my conscience.

Although I know nothing by myself, yet I cannot hereby justify myself; for without thy mercy no man living shall be justified in thy sight.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Of Eternity, and the Shortness of this Life.

Christian.—O most blessed mansion of the heavenly city! O most clear day of eternity, which night obscureth not, but the highest truth ever enlighteneth! a day of continual joy, of perpetual quietness, and never changing into a contrary state!

O that the day would once appear, and all these temporal things be at an end.

To the saints above, it shineth with everlasting brightness; but to those that are pilgrims upon earth, it appeareth only afar off, and through a glass.

O good Jesus, when shall I stand to behold thee! when shall I contemplate the glory of thy kingdom! When wilt thou be unto me all in all!

O when shall I be with thee in thy kingdom, which thou hast prepared for thy beloved, from all eternity.

2. Comfort my banishment, assuage my sorrow; for my whole desire sigheth after thee.

My God, be not far from me; depart not in thy wrath from thy servant.

Cast forth thy lightnings, and disperse them; shoot out thine arrows, and consume all the imaginations of the enemy.

Gather in, call home, my senses unto thee ; make me forget all the things of this world ; grant me to cast away speedily the imaginations of wickedness.

Succour me, O thou the everlasting Truth, that no vanity may move me.

Come, heavenly sweetness, and let all impurity flee before thee.

Pardon me, also, and mercifully forgive, as often as I think upon any thing beside thee in prayer.

I truly confess, that I am wont to be subject to many distractions.

For sometimes I am not there where I stand or sit ; but I am rather there whither my thoughts carry me.

Where my thoughts are, there am I.

But blessed is that man, that for thee, O Lord, dismisseth all creatures, violently resisteth nature, and through fervour of spirit crucifieth the lusts of the flesh, that so with a serene conscience he may offer pure prayer unto thee, and be meet to be admitted into the angelical choirs, all earthly things both outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Of the Desire of everlasting Life, and how great rewards are promised to those who fight valiantly.

Christ.—SON, when thou perceivest the desire of everlasting bliss to be given thee from above, open thy heart wide, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole soul.

Give most ardent thanks to the heavenly good-

ness, that dealeth with thee so favourably, visiteth thee mercifully, stirreth thee up fervently, sustaineth thee powerfully, lest through thy own weight, thou shouldst fall down to the things of the earth.

Neither dost thou obtain this by thine own thought and endeavour, but by the mere condescension of heavenly grace and divine favour :

To the end that thou mayest make a farther progress in holiness and humility, and prepare thyself for future battles ;

And that thou mayest cleave unto me with the whole affection of thy heart, and serve me with a fervent desire.

2. Ask not that which is delightful and profitable unto thee ; but that which is acceptable to me, and for my honour.

For, if thou judge aright, thou oughtest to prefer and follow my appointment rather than thy own desire, or any desired, thing ; for I know thy desire, and have heard thy frequent groans.

Thou wouldest now enjoy the everlasting habitation ; and thy heavenly country, replenished with all joy, now delights thee.

But that hour is not yet come : as yet there is another time, to wit, a time of war, a time of labour and trial.

Thou desirest to be filled with the Supreme Good ; but thou canst not attain it for the present.

I am the Supreme Good ; patiently wait for me, until the kingdom of God comes.

3. Now, therefore, be humbly obedient unto all, and regard not who said or commanded this :

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But take great heed, that whether thy superior, inferior, or thine equal, require any thing of thee, or do insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeavour to fulfil it with a sincere will.

Let one seek this, another that ; let him glory in this, the other in that, and be praised a thousand times ; but do thou neither rejoice in this nor in that, but in the contempt of thyself, and in my good pleasure and honour alone.

This art thou to wish ; that, whether it be by thy life, or by thy death, God may always be glorified in thee.

CHAPTER XXXV.

How a Person in a state of Affliction ought to give up himself into the Hands of God.

1. *Christian.*—LORD God, holy Father, be thou blessed, both now and evermore ; because, as thou willest, so it is done, and what thou doest is good.

Let thy servant rejoice in thee, not in himself, nor in anything else ; for thou alone art the true gladness, thou art my hope and my crown, thou art my joy and my honour, O Lord.

What hath thy servant, but what he hath received from thee, even without any merit of his ?

Thine is all that thou hast given, and whatsoever thou hast made.

I am poor, and in labour from my youth : and sometimes my soul is sorrowful even unto tears : sometimes, also, it is troubled, by reason of the evils which hang over my head.

2. I long after the joy of peace, I earnestly crave the peace of thy children, that are led by thee in the light of thy comfort.

If thou give peace, if thou pour into my heart holy joy; the soul of thy servant shall be full of gladness, and shall become devout in thy praise:

O righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is come that thy servant is to be tried. Behold, dear Father, meet it is that in this hour thy servant suffer something for thy sake.

O Father, evermore be honoured; the hour is come, which from all eternity thou didst foreknow should come; that for a short time thy servant should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly live for ever with thee;

That he should be a little despised, humbled, and made abject in the sight of men, that he may rise again with the morning of the new light, and be glorified in heaven.

Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it; and it is fulfilled, which thyself hast commanded.

3. It is a favour to thy friend, that he may suffer and be afflicted in the world for the love of thee, how often soever, and by whomsoever, thou permittest it to fall upon him. Nothing cometh to pass on earth without thy counsel, without thy providence, or without a cause.

It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast afflicted me, that I may learn thy righteous judgments, and cast away all haughtiness of heart, and presumption.

It is profitable to me, that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seek to thee for comfort than to men.

4. I have learned also to dread thy unsearchable judgments, who afflictest the just with the wicked, but not without equity and justice.

There is none under heaven that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heavenly Physician of souls, that strikest and healest, bringest down to hell, and bringest back again.

Let thy correction be upon me, and let thy rod instruct me.

5. Behold, dear Father I am in thy hands ; I bow myself under the rod of thy correction :

Strike my back and my neck, that my perverseness may be conformed to thy will.

Make me a holy and humble disciple of thine, (as thou art wont to do,) that I may be ready at every beck of thy pleasure.

I commend myself, and all that is mine unto thee to be corrected. It is better to be corrected here than hereafter.

Thou knowest every thing, and there is nothing in the conscience of man hidden from thee.

Before things are done, thou knowest that they will come to pass ; and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things which are done on earth.

Thou knowest what is expedient for my profiting, and how fit tribulation is to scour off the rust of my sins.

Do with me according to thy good pleasure, and disdain me not for my sinful life, better and more clearly known to none than to thee alone.

6. Grant me, O Lord, to know that which ought to be known, to love that which ought to be loved ;

To praise that which praiseth thee most, to esteem that which is precious unto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight.

Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the outward eyes, nor give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men ;

But to discern invisible and spiritual things with a true judgment, and, above all things, ever to search after thy good will and pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

That a Man ought to esteem himself unworthy of any comfort.

Christian.—LORD, I am not worthy of any comfort, nor any spiritual visitation. And therefore thou dealest justly with me when thou leavest me poor and desolate.

For though I could shed a sea of tears, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort.

For, alas ! I deserve nothing, but to be scourged and punished, in that I have grievously offended thee, and have sinned greatly in many things.

But thou, O merciful God, who willest not that any should perish, to show the riches of thy goodness, vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above the manner of men. For thy comforts are not like the words of men.

2. What have I done, O Lord, that thou shouldst bestow any heavenly comforts upon me ?

I remember not that I have done any good, but have been always prone to sin, and slow to amendment.

This is true, and I cannot deny it: if I should say otherwise, thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be none to defend me.

What have I deserved but hell and everlasting fire?

I confess in very truth, that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt, and it is not fit that I should be numbered among thy saints.

3. What shall I say, guilty as I am, and full of confusion? I have nothing to say, but this: "I have sinned; Lord, I have sinned: have mercy on me; pardon me!

"Suffer me a little that I may vent my grief, before I go into the land of darkness, a land covered with the shadow of death!"

What dost thou so much require of a guilty and miserable sinner, as that he be contrite, and humble himself for his offences?

Of true contrition ariseth hope of forgiveness; the favour of God, which was lost, is recovered; man is preserved from the wrath to come, and God and the penitent soul meet together with a holy kiss.

4. Humble contrition for sin is an acceptable sacrifice unto thee, O Lord, savouring much sweeter in thy presence than the perfume of frankincense.

This is also the pleasant ointment which thou wouldest should be poured upon thy sacred feet. For thou never despisest a contrite heart.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Of the different Motions of Nature and Grace.

Christ.—SON, mark diligently the motions of nature and grace ; for they move in a very subtle manner ; and they cannot be discerned but by him that is spiritually enlightened.

All men, indeed, pretend some good, in their words and deeds ; and therefore, under the show of good, many are deceived.

Nature is crafty, and seduceth, entangleth, and deceiveth many, and always proposeth herself for her end :

But grace walketh in simplicity, useth no deceit, and doth all things purely for God's sake, in whom also, she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly die, nor be kept down, nor be overcome, nor be subject to any, nor be subdued :

But grace studieth self-mortification, resisteth sensuality, seeketh to be subject, is willing to be kept under, and will not use her own liberty :

She loveth to be kept under discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but always to live and remain wholly subject to God, and for God is ready humbly to obey all men.

Nature striveth for her own advantage, and considereth what profit she may reap by another :

But grace considereth not what is profitable and advantageous unto herself, but rather what is profitable to many.

Nature willingly receiveth honour and respect : but grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory unto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt : but grace rejoiceth to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

Nature loveth ease and bodily rest :

But grace cannot be idle, but willingly embraceth labour.

Nature seeketh to have those things that are curious and beautiful, and abhorreth that which is mean or coarse :

But grace delighteth in plain and humble things, depiseth not rough things, nor refuseth to wear that which is old and mean.

Nature respecteth temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for loss, is moved with every little injurious word :

But grace thinketh on that which is everlasting, and cleaveth not to temporal things : she is not troubled at losses, nor disquieted with hard work, because she hath placed her treasure and joy in heaven, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is covetous, and doth more willingly receive than give ; she loveth her own things : but grace is bountiful, and liberal to all, shunneth private interest, is content with a little, thinketh that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Nature inclines to the creatures, to her own flesh, to vanities and wanderings :

But grace draweth unto God and unto goodness ; renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth the

desires of the flesh, restraineth wanderings abroad, blusheth to be seen in public.

Nature is willing to have some outward comfort, wherein she may be sensibly delighted : but grace seeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth above all visible things in the highest good.

5. Nature worketh all for her own gain and profit ; she can do nothing gratis, but for benefit ; she hopeth to obtain either that which is equal or better, either praise or favour, and coveteth to have her works and gifts much esteemed ;

But grace seeks no temporal thing, nor requires any other reward than God alone ; nor desireth more of temporal necessities, than what may serve her for the obtaining of things eternal.

6. Nature rejoiceth to have many friends and kinsfolks ; glorieth of noble place and birth ; is obsequious to the powerful, fawneth upon the rich, applaudeth those that are like herself :

But grace loveth her enemies, and is not puffed up with multitudes of friends ; nor esteemeth place or birth, but where it is joined with virtue ;

She rather favoureth the poor man than the rich, hath more tenderness for the innocent than the powerful ; rejoiceth in the true, not in the deceitful ;

Always exhorting good men to labour for more excellent gifts, and by goodness to resemble the Son of God.

Nature quickly complaineth of want and trouble : grace with constancy endureth need.

7. Nature referreth all things to herself, striveth and contendeth for herself :

But grace reduceth all to God, from whence

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originally they proceed ; she ascribeth no good to herself, neither doth she arrogantly presume ; she contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others ; but in every apprehension and opinion submitteth herself unto the Eternal Wisdom, and to the Divine Judgment.

Nature coveteth to know secrets and to hear news ; she will appear abroad, and make proof of many things by her own senses ; she desireth to be known and to do those things for which she may be praised and admired :

But grace careth not for hearing news, or curious matters ; she teacheth to restrain the senses, to avoid vanity and ostentation, and in every thing, and every knowledge, to seek profitable fruit, and the praise and honour of God.

She will not have herself nor her's praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in his gifts, who of mere love bestoweth all things.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

*Of the Corruption of Nature, and Efficacy of
Divine Grace.*

Christian.—O LORD, my God, who hast created me after thy image and likeness, grant me this grace, which thou hast showed to be so great and so necessary to salvation, that I may overcome my wicked nature, which draweth me to sin and perdition.

For I feel in my flesh the law of sin, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive in

many things ; neither can I resist, unless thy most holy grace fervently infused into my heart, assist me.

2. O Lord, how exceeding needful is thy grace for me to begin any good work, to go forward, and to accomplish it !

For without it I can do nothing ; but by thee I can do all things, when thy grace doth strengthen me.

O heavenly grace, without which our most worthy actions are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed !

Arts, riches, beauty, strength, wit, eloquence, are of no value with thee, O Lord, without thy grace.

3. O most blessed grace, that makest the poor in spirit rich in virtues, and makest the rich in many blessings to be humble in heart, come down unto me ; replenish me early with thy comfort, lest my soul should faint !

I beseech thee, O Lord, that I may find grace in thy sight ; for thy grace is sufficient for me, though other things that nature desireth be wanting.

If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not fear any evil, while thy grace is with me.

This is my strength that giveth advice and help. This is stronger than all enemies, and wiser than all the wise.

4. Thy grace is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the heart, the solace of affliction, the driver away of sorrow, the expeller of fear, the nurse of devotion, and the mother of tears.

What am I without it, but a withered piece of wood, and an unprofitable stock, only meet to be cast away ?

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Let thy grace therefore, O Lord, always prevent and follow me, and make me ever diligent in good works, through Jesus Christ thy Son! Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

That we ought to deny Ourselves, and imitate Christ.

Christ.—FOLLOW me ; I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Without the way, there is no going aright ; without the truth, there is no knowledge ; without life, there is no living.

I am the Way, which thou oughtest to follow ; the Truth, which thou oughtest to trust ; the Life, which thou oughtest to hope for.

I am the Way inviolable, the truth infallible, the Life which cannot end.

I am the most straight Way, the supreme Truth, the true Life ; yea, the blessed and uncreated Life.

If thou remain in my way, thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free, and thou shalt lay hold on everlasting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. If thou wilt know the truth, believe me. If thou wilt be my disciple, renounce thyself. If thou wilt be exalted in heaven, humble thyself upon earth.

If thou wilt reign with me, bear the cross with me. For only the servants of the cross find the way of bliss and true light.

3. *Christian.*—Lord Jesus forasmuch as thy life was poor and contemptible unto the world, grant

me grace to imitate thee in suffering worldly contempt.

For the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the disciple above his Master.

Let thy servant be exercised in thy life, for therein my salvation and true holiness consist.

Whatsoever I read or hear besides it, doth not refresh or delight me fully.

4. *Christ.*—Son, now that thou knowest these things, happy shalt thou be if thou do them. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.

And I will love him and manifest myself unto him, and make him sit with me in the kingdom of my Father.

Christian.—Lord Jesus, as thou hast said and promised, so let it come to pass.

I have received the cross, I have received it from thy hand ; I will bear it, and bear it till death, as thou hast laid it upon me.

Truly the life of a Christian is the cross ; but yet it is a guide to paradise.

I have begun, I may not go back, neither is it fit to leave that which I have undertaken.

Let us then take courage, my brethren, and go forwards together ; Jesus will be with us.

For Jesu's sake we have undertaken his cross. For Jesu's sake let us persevere therein. He will be our helper, who is our guide and forerunner.

Behold, our King goeth before us, who also will fight for us.

Let us follow him manfully : let us not be dismayed, but be ready to die valiantly in the battle ;

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CHAPTER XL.

That a Man be not too much dejected when he feeleth some Defect.

Christ.—SON, patience and humility in adversity are more pleasing to me, than much comfort and devotion in prosperity.

Why art thou grieved for every little trifle spoken against thee!

Although it had been much more, thou oughtest not to have been moved.

But now let it pass: it is not the first that hath happened, nor is it any new thing; neither shall it be the last, if thou live long.

Thou art valiant enough, as long as no adversity happeneth.

Thou canst give good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy words; but when tribulation suddenly cometh to thy door, thou art destitute of counsel and strength.

See, therefore, thy great frailty, which thou often hast experienced upon slight occasions. It is, notwithstanding, intended for thy good, when these and such like things befall thee.

I yet live, saith the Lord, ready to help thee, and to give thee greater comfort than before, if thou put thy trust in me, and call devoutly upon me.

2. Be more patient, and prepare thyself for greater sufferings. All is not lost, if thou feel thyself often afflicted, or grievously tempted.

I am he who will strengthen with health them

that mourn, and raise up into divine glory those that know their own infirmity.

3. *Christian.*—Lord, blessed be thy word: more sweet is it unto my mouth, than the honey and the honey-comb. What should I do in so great tribulation and straits, unless thou didst comfort me with thy holy words? What matter is it, how much and what I suffer, so I may at length attain the port of salvation? Grant me a good end; grant me a happy passage out of this world! Be mindful of me, O my God, and direct me in the right way to thy kingdom! Amen.

CHAPTER XLI.

Of searching the secret Judgments of God.

Christ.—SON, beware thou disputest not of high matters, nor of the secret judgments of God:

Why this man is left, and that man taken into so great favour; why also this man is so much afflicted, and that man so greatly advanced. These things are beyond the reach of man; neither can any reason or disputation search out the judgments of God.

When the enemy, therefore, suggesteth these things unto thee, or some curious people inquire of thee, answer, "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgments are right." And, again, "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." My judgments are to be feared, not to be discussed; for they are such as cannot be comprehended by the understanding of men.

2. Neither inquire or dispute of the merits of saints, which of them is holier than the other, which of them the greater in the kingdom of hea-

ven. These things often bring strife and unprofitable contention ; they nourish also pride and vain-glory, from whence spring envy and dissensions.

I am he who made all saints : I gave them grace ; I will give them glory. I know what every one hath deserved : I have prevented them with the blessings of my goodness, I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through sundry temptations. I poured into them glorious comforts. I gave them perseverance. I will crown their patience.

3. I know both the first and the last ; I embrace all with estimable love. I am to be praised in all my saints ; I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in every one.

CHAPTER XLII.

That all our Hope and Trust are to be fixed in God alone.

Christian.—LORD, what is my trust in this life ? or, what is my greatest comfort of all things under heaven ? Is it not thou, my Lord God, whose mercies are without number ? Where hath it been well with me, without thee ? Or when could it be ill with me, when thou wast present ?

I had rather be poor with thee, than rich without thee. I had rather choose to be a pilgrim on earth with thee, than to possess heaven without thee.

Where thou art, there is heaven ; and there are death and hell where thou art not. Thou art my desire, and therefore I cannot but sigh, and cry, and pray unto thee. For I have none to trust in, none that can help me in my necessities, but thee alone, my God.

Thou art my hope, thou art my trust, thou art my comfort, and most faithful unto me in all things.

2. All men seek their own ; thou only seekest my salvation, and turnest all things to my good.

Although thou exposest me to divers temptations and adversities ; yet thou orderest all things to my advantage, who art wont to try thy beloved a thousand ways. In which trials thou oughtest no less to be loved and praised, than if thou didst fill me with heavenly comforts.

3. In thee, therefore, O Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge : on thee I rest, in all tribulation and anguish. For I find all to be weak and inconstant whatsoever I behold out of thee.

For neither can my friends avail, nor strong helpers aid, nor wise counsellors give any profitable answer ; nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any secret or pleasant place defend ; if thou thyself do not assist, help, strengthen, comfort, instruct, and keep us.

4. For all things that seem to make for peace and felicity, without thee are nothing, and do bring, indeed, no felicity at all. Thou, therefore, art the end of all that is good, the height of life, the depth of wisdom. And the strongest comfort of thy servant is, to trust in thee above all things.

To thee, therefore, do I lift up mine eyes ; in thee, O my God, the Father of mercies, I put my trust. Bless and sanctify my soul with thy heavenly blessing, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy eternal glory ; and that nothing may be found in the temple of thy glory, that may offend the eyes of thy Majesty.

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According to the greatness of thy goodness, and the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me, and hear the prayer of thy poor servant, who is far exiled from thee, in the land of the shadow of death.

Protect and keep the soul of thy servant amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life ; and, by thy grace accompanying me, direct it by the way of peace, to the country of everlasting light. Amen.

BOOK IV.

AN EXHORTATION TO THE HOLY COMMUNION.

THE VOICE OF CHRIST.

“COME unto me, all ye that travail, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

“The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. Take, eat : this is my body, that is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

“He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. The words which I speak unto you are spirit and life.”

CHAPTER I.

With how great Reverence Christ ought to be received.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

THESE are thy words, O Christ, the everlasting Truth. Because, therefore, they are thine, and true, they are all thankfully to be received by me.

They are thine, and thou hast spoken them : and they are mine also, because thou hast spoken them

for my salvation. I willingly receive them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my heart. These gracious words, so full of sweetness and love, encourage me ; but mine own offences drive me back from receiving so great mysteries.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee ; to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtain everlasting glory. "Come," sayest thou, "all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

O sweet and friendly words in the ears of sinners, that thou, my Lord God, shouldst invite the poor and needy to the participation of thy most holy body!

But who am I, Lord, that I should presume to approach unto thee? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, and thou sayest, "Come ye all unto me!"

3. What meaneth this gracious condescension, this friendly invitation? How shall I dare to come, that know no good in myself? How shall I bring thee into my house, that have so often offended thy most gracious countenance?

The angels and archangels revere thee, and the saints and just men fear thee: and thou sayest, "Come ye all unto me!" Unless thou, O Lord, didst say it, who would believe it to be true?

And unless thou didst command it, who would dare to come unto thee? Behold, Noah, a just man, laboured a hundred years in making the ark, that he might be saved with a few: and how can I, in one hour, prepare myself to receive with reverence the maker of the world?

4. Moses, thy great servant, and thy special friend, made an ark of incorruptible wood, which also he covered with pure gold, and put the Tables of the Law therein : and how shall I, a corruptible creature, dare lightly to receive the Maker of the law, and the Giver of life ?

Solomon bestowed seven years in building a magnificent temple to the praise of thy name.

He celebrated the feast of the dedication thereof, eight days together : he offered a thousand peace-offerings, and solemnly set the ark on the place prepared for it, with the sound of trumpets and of joy. And how shall I, the most miserable and poorest of men, bring thee into my house, that can scarce spend one half hour devoutly ? Yea, would I could once spend near half an hour in a due manner :

5. O my God, how much did they do out of an endeavour to please thee ! And, alas ! how little is that which I do ! How little time do I spend to prepare myself to receive thy salvation !

I am seldom wholly recollected, seldom free from all distraction. And yet surely no unbecoming thought ought to appear in the presence of the Deity, nor any creature find any place in me. For I am not to harbour an angel, but the Lord of angels.

6. And yet there is a great difference between the ark of the covenant, and thy most pure body ; between those legal sacrifices, figures of future things, and the completion of all ancient sacrifices.

Why, therefore, am I not more inflamed at thy venerable presence ?

7. David danced before the ark with all his might, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in

times past upon his forefathers. He made instruments of sundry kinds ; he composed Psalms, and appointed them to be sung with joy.

He also himself sung to the harp, being inspired with the grace of the Holy Spirit. He taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole heart, and with joint voices every day to bless and praise him. If so great devotion was then shown, and there was such a celebrating of the divine praise before the ark of the testament ; what reverence and devotion are now to be performed by me, and all Christian people, in receiving the most precious body and blood of Christ !

8. O God, the Creator of the world, how wonderfully dost thou deal with us ! How sweetly and graciously dost thou dispose of all things to thine elect, to whom thou offerest thyself to be received in this sacrament ! This exceedeth all understanding. This strongly draweth the hearts of the devout, and inflameth their affections.

9. O the admirable and hidden grace of this sacrament, which only the faithful know ; but the unbelieving, and such as are slaves unto sin, cannot experience ! In this sacrament, spiritual grace is given, and strength which was lost is restored in the soul, and the beauty disfigured by sin returns again.

This grace is sometimes so great, that not only the mind, but the weak body also, feeleth great increase of strength.

10. Our coldness and negligence are much to be bawailed, that we are not drawn with great affections to receive Christ, in whom all the hope of those that are to be saved consists. For he is our

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Sanctification and Redemption. He is the Comforter of us travellers, and the everlasting Fruition of saints. It is much, therefore, to be lamented that many so little consider the salutary mystery, which rejoiceth heaven, and preserveth the whole world. O the blindness and hardness of man's heart, that doth not more deeply, weigh so unspeakably a gift.

11. If the holy sacrament were celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by only one person in the world; with how great desire would men be affected to that place, and to such a minister, that they might enjoy these divine mysteries!

But now Christ is offered in many places, that so the grace and love of God to man may appear greater. Thanks be unto thee, gracious Jesus, the everlasting Shepherd, who hast vouchsafed to refresh us poor exiles with thy precious body and blood, and to invite us to the receiving of these mysteries with the words of thine own mouth, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

CHAPTER II.

That the great Goodness and Love of God is exhibited to Man in this Sacrament.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

IN confidence of thy goodness and great mercy, I come, O Lord, a sick man, unto my Saviour; hungry and thirsty, to the Fountain of Life; needy, to the King of heaven; a servant, unto my Lord; a creature, to his Creator; disconsolate, to thee my merciful Comforter. But whence is this to me,

that thou vouchsafest to come unto me? Who am I, that thou shouldest give thyself unto me? How dare a sinner appear before thee? And how is it that thou dost vouchsafe to come unto a sinner?

Thou knowest thy servant, and seest that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou shouldest bestow this favour upon him. I confess, therefore, my unworthiness; I acknowledge thy goodness: I praise thy mercy, and give thee thanks for this thy transcendent love. For thou doest this for thine own sake, not for any merits of mine; that thy goodness may be better known unto me, thy love more abundantly shown, and thy gracious condescension the more eminently displayed.

Since, therefore, it is thy pleasure, and thou hast commanded that it should be so, this thy favour is also pleasing to me; and may my sins be no hindrance!

2. O most sweet and benign Jesus, how great reverence and thanks, together with perpetual praise, is due unto thee, for the receiving of thy sacred body, whose preciousness no man is able to express! But what shall I think, now that I am to approach unto my Lord, whom I am not able duly to honour, and yet I desire to receive him with devotion? What can I think better and more profitable, than to humble myself wholly before thee, and to exalt thine infinite goodness over me?

I praise thee, my God, and will exalt thee for ever. I despise and submit myself unto thee, in a deep sense of my own unworthiness.

3, Behold, thou inclinest unto me, who am not worthy so much as to look up unto thee? Behold,

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thou art most holy, and I the vilest of sinners! Behold, thou comest unto me, it is thy will to be with me, thou invitest me to thy banquet!

Thou wilt give me the food of heaven, the bread of angels to eat, which is no other than thyself, the living Bread, that descendeth from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

4. Behold from whence doth this love proceed! What gracious condescension appeareth herein! How great thanks and praises are due unto thee for these benefits! O how good and profitable was thy counsel, when thou ordainedst it! how sweet and pleasant the banquet, when thou givest thyself to be our food! How wonderful is thy operation, O Lord, how mighty is thy power, how unspeakable is thy truth! For thou saidst the word, and all things were made! and this was done which thou commandedst.

5. A thing of great admiration, that thou, my Lord God, shouldest be exhibited unto us by the elements of bread and wine! Thou, who art the Lord of all things, and standest in need of none, hast pleased to dwell in us by means of this thy sacrament. Preserve my heart and body undefiled, that with a cheerful and pure conscience I may often celebrate thy mysteries, and receive them to my everlasting health: which thou hast ordained and instituted for thy honour and for a perpetual memorial.

6. Rejoice, O my soul, and give thanks unto God, for so excellent a gift, so singular a comfort left unto me in this vale of tears! For as often as thou celebratest this mystery, and receivest the body of

Christ, so often art thou made partaker of all the merits of Christ. For the love of Christ is never diminished, and the greatness of his propitiation is never exhausted. Therefore thou oughtest always to weigh with attentive consideration this great mystery of thy salvation.

So great, new, and joyful, it ought to seem unto thee, when thou comest to these holy mysteries ; as if the same day Christ, descending into the womb of the Virgin, was become man ; or hanging on the cross, did suffer and die for the salvation of mankind.

CHAPTER III.

That it is profitable to Communicate often.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

BEHOLD, O Lord, I come unto thee, that I may be comforted by thy gift, and delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O God, hast prepared in thy goodness for the poor. Behold, in thee is all I can or ought to desire : thou art my salvation, and my redemption, my hope, and my strength, my honour, and my glory ! Make joyful, therefore, this day, the soul of thy servant ; for I have lifted it up unto thee, O Lord Jesus ! I desire to receive thee now with devotion and reverence. I long to bring thee into my house ; that with Zaccheus I may be blessed by thee, and numbered amongst the children of Abraham. My soul thirsteth to receive thy body and blood, my heart desireth to be united with thee.

2. Give me thyself, and it sufficeth ; for besides thee, no comfort is available. I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy visitation ; and, therefore, I must often come unto thee, and receive thee

for the welfare of my soul, lest haply I faint in the way, if I be deprived of thy heavenly food. For so, most merciful Jesu, thou once did say, preaching to the people, and curing sundry diseases, "I will not send them home fasting, lest they faint in the way." Deal thou, therefore, in like manner now with me, who hast vouchsafed to leave thyself in the sacrament for the comfort of the faithful.

For thou art the sweet refreshing of the soul ; and he that eateth thee worthily shall be partaker of everlasting glory.

3. O the wonderful condescension of thy mercy towards us, that thou, O Lord God, the Creator and Giver of life to all spirits, dost vouchsafe to come into a poor soul, and to replenish her hunger !

O happy mind, and blessed soul, that receives thee, her Lord God, with devout affection, and in receiving of thee, is filled with spiritual joy ! O how great a Lord doth she entertain ! how beloved a Guest doth she harbour ! how pleasant a Companion doth she receive ! how faithful a Friend doth she take in ! how lovely and glorious a Spouse doth she embrace ! She embraceth Him who is to be loved above all that is beloved, and above all things that may be desired.

Let heaven and earth, and all the hosts of them, be silent in thy presence : for what praise and beauty soever they have, it is received from thy bounty, and cannot equal the beauty of thy name, of whose wisdom there is no number.

CHAPTER IV.

That many Gifts are bestowed upon them that communicate devoutly.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

My Lord God, prevent thy servant with the blessings of thy sweetness, that I may approach worthily and devoutly to thy glorious sacrament. Stir up my heart unto thee, and deliver me from a heavy numbness of mind. Visit me with thy salvation, that I may taste in spirit thy sweetness, which plentifully lieth hid in this sacrament as in a fountain. Enlighten also my eyes, to behold so great a mystery, and strengthen me to believe it with steady faith. For it is thy work, and not man's power ; thy sacred institution, and not man's invention.

For no man is of himself able to comprehend these things, which surpass the understanding even of angels. What, therefore, shall I, unworthy sinner, dust, and ashes, be able to comprehend of so high and sacred a mystery ?

2. O Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, at thy commandment I come unto thee, with hope and reverence ; and do truly believe thou art present in this sacrament. Thy will is, that I receive thee, and that by love I unite myself unto thee.

Wherefore, I implore thy Mercy, and crave thy special grace, that I may wholly melt and overflow with love unto thee, and hereafter never seek any comfort out of thee. For this sacrament is the health of the soul and body, the remedy of all spiritual weakness ; hereby my vices are cured, my passions bridled, temptations overcome, grace is

infused, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and love inflamed.

3. For thou hast bestowed, and still often dost bestow, many benefits in the sacrament, O my God, the Protector of my soul, the repairer of human frailty, and the Giver of inward comfort! Thou impartest unto them much comfort against sundry tribulations. Thou liftest them up from the depth of their own dejectedness, to hope in thy protection.

Thou dost inwardly refresh and enlighten them with new grace; so that they who, before communicating, were heavy and unaffected, after being refreshed with heavenly meat and drink, find in themselves a great change. For who is there, that, approaching humbly unto the fountain of sweetness, doth not carry away from thence at least some little sweetness? Or who, standing by a great fire, receiveth not some small heat thereby? Thou art a fountain always full and overflowing; a fire ever burning, and never decaying.

4. Wherefore, if I cannot draw out of the full fountain itself, nor drink my fill, I will, notwithstanding, set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduit, that I may draw from thence some drops to refresh my thirst, and not be wholly dried up.

And though I be not altogether heavenly, nor so inflamed as the cherubim and seraphim, notwithstanding, I will endeavour after some small spark of divine fire, by humbly receiving this enlivening sacrament. And whatsoever is wanting in me, O merciful Jesu, most holy Saviour, do thou graciously supply, who hast vouchsafed to call all unto thee,

"Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

5. I indeed labour in the sweat of my brow, I am burdened with sin, I am troubled with temptations, I am entangled with evil passions; and there is none to help me, none to save me, but thou O Lord, my Saviour, to whom I commit myself, and all that is mine, that thou mayest keep me, and bring me to life everlasting.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Dignity of this Sacrament, and of the Ministerial Function.

THE VOICE OF CHRIST.

IF thou hadst the purity of an angel, and the sanctity of John the Baptist, thou wert not worthy to receive this sacrament. For no man can deserve to receive for food the bread of angels. A great mystery, and great is the dignity of the ministers of God, to whom is given that which is not given to angels. For the priest is the minister of God, using the word of God, by God's commandment and appointment. But God is there, the principal author, and invisible worker.

2. Consider attentively whose minister thou art made by the imposition of the hands of the bishop. Behold, thou art made a priest, and consecrated to celebrate; see now that thou faithfully and devoutly offer this sacrifice to God in due time, and behave thyself unprovably.

A minister ought to be adorned with all virtues, and to give an example to others. His conversation should not be according to the ordinary way of men, but like to the angels in heaven.

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3. A minister is to pray humbly with a prostrate mind unto God, for himself and the whole people.

Neither ought he to cease from prayer, till he obtain grace and mercy.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the examining our Conscience, and purpose of Amendment.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED.

ABOVE all things, we ought to receive this sacrament with great humility of heart, and lowly reverence, and a pious intending of the honour of God.

Examine diligently thy conscience ; so as there be nothing burdensome unto thee, or that may breed in thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free access.

And confess unto God in the secret of thy heart, all the miseries of thy disordered passions.

2. Lament and grieve, that thou art yet so carnal, so unmortified as to thy passions ; so unwatchful over thy outward senses, so often entangled with vain imaginations ; so cold in prayer, so dry in receiving ; so quickly distracted, so seldom wholly recollected ; so suddenly removed to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another ; so prone to judge, so severe to reprehend ; so often purposing much good, and yet performing little.

3. These and other thy defects being confessed, with full resignation, and with thy whole will, offer up thyself a perpetual sacrifice to the honour of my name on the altar of the heart, faithfully committing thy body and soul unto me : that so

thou mayest come worthily to receive the sacrament of my body.

4. For a man hath no further oblation, than to offer up himself unto God in the holy communion.

And whensoever he shall come to me for pardon and grace, as I live, saith the Lord, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, I will not remember his sins any more, but they shall be forgiven him.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Oblation of Christ on the Cross, and Resignation of ourselves.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED.

As I willingly offered up myself unto God my Father for thy sins, my hands being stretched forth on the cross, and my body naked, so that nothing remained in me that was not wholly turned into a sacrifice for the appeasing of the Divine Majesty ;

So oughtest thou also to offer up thyself willingly unto me every day, as a pure and holy oblation, with all thy might and affections, in as hearty a manner as thou canst. What do I require of thee more, than that thou entirely resign thyself unto me ? Whatsoever thou givest besides thyself, is of no account in my sight ; for I seek not thy gifts, but thyself.

2. As it would not suffice thee to have all things besides me ; so neither can it please me, whatsoever thou givest, if thou offer not thyself. Offer up thyself unto me, and give thyself wholly unto God ; and thy offering shall be accepted. Behold, I offered up myself wholly unto my Father for thee,

that I might be wholly thine, and thou remain mine. But if thou do not offer thyself up freely unto my will, thy oblation is not entire, neither will the union between us be perfect.

Therefore, a free offering up of thyself into the hands of God ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtain freedom and grace.

For this cause, so few become inwardly free, because they cannot wholly deny themselves.

My saying is unalterable, "Unless a man forsake all he cannot be my disciple." Therefore, if thou desirest to be my disciple, offer up thyself unto me with thy whole affections.

CHAPTER VIII.

That we ought to offer up ourselves, and all that is ours, unto God, and to pray for all.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

THINE, O Lord, are all things that are in heaven and in earth. I desire to offer up myself unto thee, as a free oblation, and to remain always thine.

O Lord, in the simplicity of my heart I offer myself unto thee this day, for a sacrifice of perpetual praise, to be thy servant for ever.

2. I offer unto thee, O Lord, all my sins and offences, which I have committed before thee and thy holy angels, from the day wherein I first could sin, to this hour, upon thy merciful altar.

Consume and burn them all with the fire of thy love, and wash out all the stains of my sins.

O cleanse my conscience from all offences, and restore to me thy grace, which I lost by sin, by fully forgiving me all my offences, and receiving me mercifully to the kiss of thy peace!

3. What can I do for my sins, but humbly confess and bewail them, and incessantly entreat thy favour? I beseech thee hear me graciously, when I stand before thee, O my God!

All my sins are very displeasing unto me; I will never commit them any more; but I bewail, and will bewail them as long as I live, and am purposed to repent, and, according to the utmost of my power, to please thee.

Forgive me, O God, forgive me my sins, for thy holy name's sake! Save my soul, which thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood! Behold, I commit myself to thy mercy; I resign myself over into thy hands. Do with me according to thy goodness, not according to my wickedness.

4. I offer up also unto thee whatsoever is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou mayest amend and sanctify it:

That thou mayest make it grateful and acceptable unto thee, and always perfect it more and more;

And bring me also, who am a slothful and unprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer up also unto thee all the pious desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents, friends, brethren, sisters; and of all those that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to myself or others; and that have desired me to pray for them and theirs; that they may all receive the help of thy grace, protection from dangers, deliverance from pain; and, being freed from all evils, may joyfully give worthy thanks unto thee.

6. I offer up also unto thee my prayers, especially for them who have in any thing wronged, grieved,

or slandered me, or have done me any damage or displeasure ; and for all those also, whom I have at any time troubled, grieved, or scandalized by words or deeds, wittingly or at unawares ; that it may please thee to forgive us all our sins and offences, one against another.

Take, O Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may impair charity and lessen brotherly love. Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave thy mercy ; give grace unto them that stand in need thereof, and grant that we may be counted worthy to enjoy thy grace, and to attain to life everlasting. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

That the Body of Christ, and the Holy Scriptures, are most necessary unto a faithful Soul.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

O SWEETEST Lord Jesus, how great sweetness hath a holy soul that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is set no other food to be eaten but thyself, the most to be desired above all the desires of the heart ! And verily it would be a sweet thing unto me to pour out tears from the very bottom of my heart in thy presence ; and with holy Magdalene to wash thy feet with my tears.

But where is this devotion ? where is this plentiful shedding of holy tears ? Surely, in the sight of thee and thy holy angels, my whole heart should be inflamed, and even weep for joy.

For I enjoy thee in the sacrament truly present, though hidden under another representation.

2. For to behold thee in thine own divine brightness, mine eyes would not be able to endure it. Neither could the whole world stand in the brightness of the glory of thy Majesty. I enjoy and adore Him, whom the angels adore in heaven :

But I, as yet, by faith, they by sight, and without a veil. I ought to be content with the light of true faith, and to walk therein until the day of everlasting brightness break forth, and the shadow of figures pass away. But when that which is perfect shall come, the use of sacraments shall cease.

For the blessed in glory need not any sacramental remedy, but rejoice without end in the presence of God. Beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed from glory to glory into the image of the incomprehensible Deity, they taste the Word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for ever.

3. Thou art my witness, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature can give me rest, but thou, my God, whom I desire to behold everlastingly.

But this is not possible while I remain in this mortal life. Therefore, I must frame myself to much patience, and submit myself to thee in all my desires. For thy saints also, O Lord, who now rejoice with thee, while they lived, expected in faith and great patience the coming of thy glory. What they believed, I believe ; what they hoped for, I also hope for ; whither they are come, I trust, I shall come by thy grace. In the meantime I will go forward in faith, strengthened by their examples.

4. I perceive two things to be especially necessary for me in this life, without which it would be in-

supportable. Whilst I am kept in the prison of of this body, I need two things, food and light.

Thou hast therefore given unto me, a weak creature, thy sacred body and blood for the nourishment of my soul and body ; and thou hast set thy word as a light unto my feet : without these two I could not well live. For the Word of God is the light of the soul, and thy sacrament the bread of life. These also may be called the two tables, set on the one side, and on the other, in the storehouse of the holy church. One is the holy altar, having the holy bread, that is the precious body of Christ. The other is the divine law, containing holy doctrine, teaching the true faith, and leading to that within the veil, where is the holy of holies.

Thanks be unto thee, O Lord Jesus, the light of everlasting life, for the table of holy doctrine, which thou hast offered us by thy servants the Prophets, and Apostles, and other teachers.

5. Thanks be unto thee, O thou Creator and Redeemer of man, who, to manifest thy love to the whole world, hast prepared a great supper, wherein thou hast set before us (not the typical lamb, but) thy most sacred body and blood :

Rejoicing all the faithful with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them with the cup of salvation, in which are all the delights of paradise ; and the holy angels feast with us, but yet with a more happy sweetness.

O how great and honourable is the office of God's ministers ! to whom it is given, with sacred words to consecrate the sacrament of the Lord of glory ; with their lips to bless, with their hands to

hold, with their mouth to receive, and also to administer it to others!

O how clean ought to be those hands, how pure that mouth, how holy that body, how unspotted that heart, where the Author of purity entereth!

Nothing but what is holy, no word but what is good and profitable, ought to proceed from his mouth, who receiveth the sacrament of Christ.

6. Simple and chaste ought to be the eyes that behold the body of Christ. Pure and lifted up to heaven should be the hands that receive the Creator of heaven and earth. Unto the priests especially it is said, "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."

7. Assist us, Almighty God, with thy grace, that we who have undertaken the office of priesthood, may serve thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity and good conscience. And if we cannot live in so great innocency as we ought, grant us at least duly to bewail the sins which we have committed, and in the spirit of humility, and with full purpose of heart, to serve thee hereafter more fervently.

CHAPTER X.

How he who is to communicate, ought to prepare himself.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED.

I AM the lover of purity, and the giver of all holiness. I seek a pure heart, and there is the place of my rest. Make ready and adorn for me the guest-chamber, and I will keep with thee the passover among my disciples.

2. Know thou, notwithstanding, that no merit of

any action of thine is able to make this preparation, although thou shouldest prepare thyself a whole year together, and think of nothing else.

Thou art of my mere grace and favour suffered to come to my table. Like a beggar invited to dinner by a rich man, who hath nothing else to return him for his benefits, but to humble himself and give him thanks. Do what lieth in thee, and do it diligently; not for custom, not for necessity, but with fear, and reverence, and affection, receive thy beloved Lord God, who vouchsafeth to come unto thee.

I am he that hath called thee; I have commanded it to be done; I will supply what is wanting in thee: come and receive me.

3. When I bestow the grace of devotion, give thanks to thy God; for it is given thee, not for that thou art worthy, but because I have mercy on thee. If thou hast it not, continue in prayer, sigh, and knock, and give not over, until thou art meet to receive some drop of saving grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee. Neither comest thou to sanctify me, but I come to sanctify and improve thee in virtue.

Thou comest that thou mayest be sanctified by me, and united unto me, that thou mayest receive new grace, and be inflamed anew to amendment.

CHAPTER XI.

That a devout Soul ought to desire with her whole Heart to be united unto Christ in the Sacrament.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

WHO will give me this, O Lord, to find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee

as my soul desireth? And that no man can look toward me, nor any creature move or regard me, but thou alone mayest speak unto me, and I unto thee, as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and a friend to banquet with his friend?

This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly united unto thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things. That I may, by often communicating, learn more and more to relish heavenly and eternal things. Ah Lord God, when shall I be wholly united to thee, swallowed up in thee, and altogether forgetful of myself? Thou in me, and I in thee; so grant us both to continue in one!

2. Verily, thou art my beloved, the choicest among thousands, in whom my soul is well pleased to dwell all the days of her life. Verily, thou art my peace-maker, in whom is great peace and true rest, without whom is labour and sorrow, and infinite misery. Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, and thy counsel is not with the wicked, but thy speech is with the humble and simple of heart.

O Lord, how sweet is thy Spirit, who to show thy sweetness toward thy children, vouchsafest to feed them with the bread which descendeth from heaven! Verily, there is no other nation so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as thou our God art to all thy faithful ones. Unto whom, for their daily comfort, and for the raising up of their hearts to heaven, thou givest thyself to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other nation is there so honoured as the Christian people? Or what creature under heaven so beloved as a devout soul, to whom God himself cometh to feed her with his glorious flesh?

O unspeakable grace! O admirable condescension! O infinite love, singularly bestowed upon man! But what shall I give unto the Lord, in return for his grace, for so eminent an expression of love? There is nothing more acceptable that I am able to give, than to give my heart wholly to God, and to unite it close unto him.

Then shall my inward parts rejoice, when my soul shall be perfectly united unto God. Then he will say unto me, "If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee." And I will answer him, "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will gladly be with thee. This is my whole desire, that my heart may be united unto thee."

CHAPTER XII.

Of the fervent Desires of some devout Persons to receive the Lord's Supper.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

O HOW great is thy goodness, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!

When I remember some devout persons, who came unto thy sacrament, O Lord, with the greatest devotion and affection, I am confounded, and blush within myself, that I come so heavily and coldly to thy table!

That I remain so dry, and without hearty affection; that I am not wholly inflamed in thy presence, my God, nor so earnestly drawn in affection, as many devout persons have been, who with desire both of soul and body, earnestly longed after thee, O God, the living Fountain.

Be merciful unto me, good Jesu, sweet and gra-

cious Lord ; and grant me, thy poor, needy creature, to feel sometimes, at least, in this holy communion, somewhat of thy tender, cordial affection :

That my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in thy goodness increased ; and that my love, once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heavenly manna, may never decay.

2. Thy mercy, O Lord, is able to give me the grace I desire, and to visit me with the spirit of fervour. For though I burn not with so great desires as those that are so singularly devoted to thee ; yet, by thy grace, I desire to have this great, inflamed desire ; praying and craving that I may partake with all such thy fervent lovers, and be numbered among them.

CHAPTER XIII.

That the Grace of Devotion is obtained by Humility, and renouncing ourselves.

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED.

THOU oughtest to seek the grace of devotion fervently, to ask it earnestly, to expect it patiently and with confidence, to receive it gratefully, to keep it humbly, to work with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heavenly visitation to God, until it shall please him to come unto thee. Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thyself, when thou feelest inwardly little devotion ; and yet not to be too much dejected.

God often giveth in a moment, that which he hath a long time denied. He giveth sometimes in the end, that which in the beginning of prayer he deferreth to grant. It is sometimes a little thing

that hindereth and hideth grace from us ; if it may be called little, and not rather great, that hindereth so great good. But if thou remove this, be it great or small, thou shalt have thy desire.

2. For as soon as ever thou hast delivered thyself to God with thy whole heart, and seekest not this or that for thine own pleasure or will, but fixest thyself wholly upon him, thou shalt find thyself united, and at peace. For nothing will relish so well, and please thee so much, as what pleases the divine will.

3. Then shall he see, and be filled, and wonder, and his heart shall be enlarged within him ; because the hand of the Lord is with him, and he hath put himself wholly into his hands for ever.

Behold, so shall the man be blessed, that seeketh God with his whole heart. This man obtaineth a high degree of divine union, in receiving the holy eucharist. Because he respecteth not his own comfort, but, above all comfort, the honour and glory of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

That we ought to lay open our Necessities to Christ, and crave his Grace.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

O MOST loving Lord, whom I now desire to receive with all devotion, thou knowest my infirmity, and the necessity which I endure ; with how many evils I am oppressed, how often I am grieved, tempted, troubled, and defiled. I am come unto thee for a remedy, I crave of thee comfort and succour. I speak to him that knoweth all things, to whom all my inward parts are open, and who

alone can perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what good things I stand most in need of, and how poor I am in virtues.

2. Behold, I stand before thee poor and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy. Refresh thy hungry beggar, inflame my coldness with the fire of thy love, enlighten my blindness with the brightness of thy presence. Turn all earthly things to me into bitterness, all things grievous into patience, all created things into contempt and oblivion.

Lift up my heart to thee in heaven, and suffer me not to wander upon earth. Be thou only sweet unto me from henceforth for evermore.

For thou only art my meat and my drink, my love and my joy, my sweetness, and all my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholly inflame, and transform me into thyself: that I might be made one spirit with thee, by the grace of inward union, and by the meltings of ardent love! Suffer me not to go from thee hungry and thirsty; but deal mercifully with me, as thou hast often dealt wonderfully with thy saints.

What marvel is it, if I should be wholly inflamed by thee, and die to myself? Since thou art a fire always burning, and never decaying, love purifying the heart, and enlightening the understanding!

CHAPTER XV.

Of fervent Love and vehement Desire to receive Christ.

THE VOICE OF THE DISCIPLE.

WITH great devotion, and ardent love, with the affection and fervour of my whole heart, I desire

to receive thee, O Lord, as many saints and devout persons have desired thee, when they received thy sacrament, who were most pleasing unto thee in holiness of life, and most fervent in devotion. O my God, my everlasting Love, my whole Good, my never-ending Happiness, I would gladly receive thee with the most vehement desire, and most worthy reverence that any of the saints ever had or could feel.

2. And although I be unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had all those inflamed desires. Yea, and whatsoever an holy mind can conceive and desire; all this, with the greatest reverence, and most inward affection, I offer and present unto thee. I desire to reserve nothing to myself, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice myself and all mine unto thee.

My Lord God, my Creator and my Redeemer, I desire to receive thee this day, with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour, with such gratitude, worthiness, and love, with such faith, hope, and purity, as thy holy mother received and desired thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the angel, who declared unto her the mystery of thy incarnation,—“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done unto me according to thy word.”

3. And as thy blessed forerunner, John the Baptist, leaped for joy, by reason of the Holy Ghost, while he was shut up in his mother's womb; and afterwards, seeing Jesus walking among men, humbling himself deeply, said with devout affection, “The friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy for the voice of the

bridegroom ;" so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to offer myself up to thee with my whole heart.

Wherefore I offer also, and present unto thee, the joys, fervent affections, ecstasies, and supernatural illuminations and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the virtues and praises celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth, that by all thou mayest be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4. Receive, my Lord God, my wishes and desires of giving thee infinite praise and immense blessing, which, according to the multitude of thy unspeakable greatness, are most justly due unto thee.

These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee every day and moment ; I do intreat and invite all heavenly minds, and all thy devout servants, to give thanks and praises together with me.

5. Let all people, tribes, and tongues, praise thee, and magnify thy holy name, with the highest joy and most fervent devotion : and let all that reverently celebrate thy holy sacrament, find grace and mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me a sinful creature. And when they shall have obtained their desired devotion and joyful union, and depart from thy sacred and heavenly table, well comforted, and marvellously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poor soul.

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